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THE INFERNO OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

"A translation should present a true photograph of the original."—BISHOP OF RIPON.

"The lineaments of a poem are, in great part, in its rhythm."

"As its tune is to a song, and as its savour to a dish, so is its rhythm to a poem."

○

THE INFERNO OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

LITERALLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE
IN THE MEASURE OF THE ORIGINAL

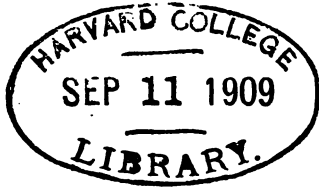
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ERRATA

- Page 3, line 51. Delete comma*
- „ 38, „ 47. Delete second comma*
- „ 83, „ 40. For branch read brand*
- „ 104, „ 42. For I read I'*
- „ 180, „ 94. Delete second comma*

INFERNO

CANTO I

MIDWAY upon the road of our life's journey
I found myself within a dark wood faring ;
For the straight way was lost by misadventure. 3

Ah me ! how hard a thing it is, the telling
What this wood was, how wild, and rough and
stubborn,
Which wakes my fear anew at the mere
thinking : 6

Death is so bitter, death is scarce more bitter.
But, that the good I found there I may treat
of,
I will tell of the other things that there I
witnessed. 9

I cannot well repeat how there I entered ;
I was so full of slumber at the moment
When I the pathway of the truth abandoned. 12

But, when I came to where a hill uprises,
The place whereat that valley terminated
That with the lance of fear had pierced my
bosom, 15

I looked on high, and I beheld its shoulders
 Clothed with the rays already of the planet
 Which leadeth all men straight through every
 pathway. 18

At that the fear was quieted a little
 Which in the deep lake of my heart had lasted
 Throughout the night I spent in plight so
 piteous. 21

And as one who, when he with breath distressful
 Forth from the deep unto the shore hath
 issued,
 Turns back and gazes on the perilous water, 24
 So did my mind, continually retreating,
 Turn backward to survey the path that never
 Had yet allowed a living soul to issue. 27

When I my weary body awhile had rested,
 I took my way along the desert upland,
 So that the firm-set foot was always lower : 30

And lo ! there, almost at the steep's beginning,
 A panther, light of tread and very nimble,
 That with a coat of spotted fur was covered, 33

And never from before my face departed :
 Indeed, so much did it impede my journey,
 Time and again I turned me for returning. 36

The time was at the morning's first commencement,
 And with those stars the sun was mounting
 upward
 That were beside him when, in the beginning, 39

The Love Divine set those fair things in motion :
So that I had good reason to be hopeful
As to that creature with its skin bedizened, 42
Both from the hour of time and the sweet season :
Yet not so that the aspect of a lion
That came in sight did not with fear inspire me : 45
He seemed as if he bent his course against me,
With head held high and filled with rabid hunger,
So that it seemed the very air did fear him : 48
And a she-wolf, that seemed in her much leanness
With every sort of craving to be laden,
And had before made many folk live abject,— 51
She put so much of heaviness upon me
With the great fear that issued from her aspect
That I lost hope of reaching to the summit. 54
And as one is who gathers riches gladly,
And comes the time which maketh him a loser,
Who then in all his thoughts doth moan and
sorrow, 57
Even such an one that beast unresting made me,
Which, coming on to meet me, thrust me
backward,
Little by little, where the sun is silent. 60
While I was tottering back into the lowland,
Before my eyes one had himself presented
Who seemed grown faint by reason of long
silence. 63
When I in the great wilderness espied him,

- I cried aloud to him : " Have pity on me,
 Whate'er thou be, or shade or man authentic." 66
- He answered me : " Not man ; a man aforetime
 I was, and Lombard people were my parents,
 And Mantuans were both of them by country. 69
- Sub Julio* I was born, though late my advent,
 And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
 And in the time of the false gods and lying. 72
- Poet I was and singer of that righteous
 Son of Anchises, who from Troy came hither
 After proud Ilion was burned to ashes. 75
- But thou, why dost return to such annoyance ?
 Why dost not climb yon mount of delectation,
 That is the source and cause of all rejoicing ? " 78
- " And art thou then that Virgil, and that fountain
 Which poureth forth so wide a flood of lan-
 guage ? "
- I answered him with reverent brow and
 bashful : 81
- " O light and honour, thou, of other poets,
 May the long study and the great affection
 Profit me now, that made me search thy
 volume. 84
- Thou art my master, and thou art my author :
 And thou alone art he from whom I borrowed
 The polished style that hath achieved me
 honour. 87
- Look at the beast, for cause whereof I turned me :

Give me thine aid, O famous sage, against
her :

For she doth make my veins and pulses
quiver."

90

" Behoveth thee to take another journey,"

He made reply, when as he saw me weeping,

" If thou from this wild place wouldst find a
refuge :

93

For this same beast, for cause whereof thou criest,

To pass along her way allows no stranger,

But hindereth him so far that she doth slay
him.

96

Nature hath she so wicked and malicious

That never doth she sate her ravenous
craving,

And after food is hungrier than before it.

99

Many the living things with which she couples,

And more there will be still, until the grey-
hound

Shall come, even he who makes her die of
sorrow.

102

He shall not feed upon or land or lucre,

But upon wisdom, upon love and virtue,

And native shall he be 'twixt Feltro and
Feltro :

105

Of Italy's low estate he shall be saviour,

For whose sake maid Camilla died, and Turnus,

And Nisus, and Euryalus, in battle.

108

He shall pursue her flight through every city,
 Till he remit her to the infernal prison,
 The place whence envy wrought her first
 departure. 111

And therefore, for thy good, I thus determine,
 That thou do follow me, and I will guide thee,
 And hence will take thee through a place
 eternal, 114

Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,
 Shalt see the ancient spirits in their dolour,
 Where for the second death each one makes
 outcry : 117

And then thou shalt see those who are contented
 In fire, because they have a hope of coming
 Unto the blessèd folk, or soon or later ; 120

To whom then if to ascend thou art desirous,
 A fitter soul than I for that will meet thee :
 With her at my departing I will leave thee. 123

For that Imperial Lord who reigns up yonder,
 Because against his law I was rebellious,
 Will not through me grant access to his city. 126

In all parts is he Emperor ; there he governs ;
 There is his city, and his throne exalted ;
 Oh ! happy he whom to be there he chooses." 129

And I to him : " O poet, I entreat thee
 By that same God of whom thou hadst not
 knowledge,
 So that I may escape this ill and greater, 132

That thou do take me where thou now didst tell
me,
That I may see the portal of St. Peter,
And those thou makest out to be so mournful." 135
Then set he forth ; and I held close behind him.

CANTO II

THE day was now departing, and dun twilight
Was rescuing from their weariness all creatures
That are on earth ; and I, one and one only, 3
Was making ready to sustain the warfare
As well of the long road as of the pity,
The which my mind, which doth not stray,
shall picture. 6
O Muses, aid me now, O lofty talent !
O mind, who wrotest down that which I
witnessed,
Here thy nobility shall be apparent. 9
“ O poet,” I began, “ thou who dost guide me,
Mark well my valour, if it is enduring,
Ere to the pass profound thou dost commit me. 12
The father of King Silvius, thou tellest,
While still corruptible, had grace to visit
The immortal world, and sensibly was present : 15
Yet, if the adversary of all evil
Favoured him, thinking of the high fulfilment
To flow from him, the person and his greatness, 18
To man of wit he doth not seem unworthy.
For he of mother Rome and of its empire
In empyrean heaven was chosen for father : 21

Which empire and which city, truth to utter,
Were for that holy place ordained and stablished
Where the successor sits of greater Peter. 24
By that same journey, whence thou giv'st him
glory,
Things understood he which were the occasion
Both of his triumph and of the papal mantle. 27
Thither went afterward the Chosen Vessel,
That thence he for that faith support might
gather
Which of salvation's path is the beginning. 30
But why should I come there? And who doth
grant it?
I am not Paul, nor yet am I Æneas:
Worthy thereof nor I nor others deem me: 33
Wherefore, if to such coming I surrender,
I fear me that the coming may be foolish.
Thou art wise: more than I say thou understandest." 36
And as one is who what he wished unwishes,
And for new thoughts exchanges his set purpose,
So that he quite departs from his beginnings, 39
Such I became upon that gloomy hillside;
Because in thought the enterprise I wasted
Which had at the beginning been so eager. 42
"If of thy words I have right understanding,"

That shade of the magnanimous made answer,
 ‘ Thy soul by cowardice is overpowered, 45
 Which oftentimes doth so a man encumber
 That back from honest enterprise it turns him,
 As false sight doth a beast, when shades are
 falling. 48
 That from this dread thou may’st thyself deliver,
 I why I came will tell thee, and what was told
 me
 At the first moment when I sorrowed for thee. 51
 I was among the throng of those who hover :
 When lo ! so fair and blest a lady called me
 That I did beg of her to give commandment. 54
 Brighter than beams the star her eyes were
 shining ;
 And sweetly gan she speak to me and gently,
 In utterance with voice as of an angel : 57
 ‘ O courteous soul, of Mantua aforetime,
 Whose fame is in the world to-day enduring,
 And shall endure to the world’s furthest distance, 60
 One who is friend of mine and not of fortune
 Is so much hindered in the desert upland
 Upon his road, that he for fear hath turned
 him : 63
 And much I fear me he hath strayed already
 So far that I arose too late for succour,
 Movèd by what I heard of him in heaven. 66
 Therefore go forth, and with thy ornate language,

And whatso else for his escape is needful,
 So aid him that I may thereby be solaced. 69
 Beatrice am I, who send thee on this journey :
 I come from where I long to be returning :
 Love urged me, which inspires me now to
 speaking. 72
 When I shall be before my Lord in presence,
 Full often will I sound thy praises to him.
 With that she held her peace, and then began
 I : 75
 ‘ Lady of virtue, thou, by whose sole merit
 The human race exceedeth every content
 Within the heaven which hath its circles
 lesser, 78
 So grateful is to me this thy commandment,
 That, had I obeyed already, it still were tardy :
 Needs not thy will to me to open further ; 81
 But tell me for what cause thou hast not spared
 thee
 From coming down below into this centre
 From the ample place where to return art
 burning.’ 84
 ‘ Knowledge so intimate since thou desirest,
 She answered me, ‘ I in few words will tell
 thee
 Why herewithin I do not fear to enter. 87
 We ought to be afraid of those things only
 Which have capacity to do us mischief :

But the rest, no, because they are not fearful. 90
 Such am I made by God—to Him be glory—
 That this your misery doth not affect me,
 Nor doth the flame assail me of this burning. 93
 A gentle lady is in heaven, who pities
 This hindrance whereunto I give thee errand,
 So that she mitigates on high stern judgment. 96
 She sought Lucia out to do her bidding ;
 And said : “ Lo ! now thy faithful servant
 needs thee,
 And I do recommend him to thy keeping.” 99
 Lucia, foe of whatsoe'er is cruel,
 Set forth, and thither came where I was bidding :
 I there was sitting with the ancient Rachel. 102
 “ Beatrice, very praise of God, why dost not
 Thou succour him,” she said, “ who so much
 loved thee
 That for thy sake the vulgar throng he
 quitted ? ” 105
 Dost thou not hear the anguish of his weeping ?
 Seest thou not the death with which he
 battles
 Upon the flood where sea may cease from
 vaunting ? ” 108
 Never upon the earth were persons instant
 To make their gain, and to escape their
 damage,
 So much as I was after such words spoken. 111

Straight from my blissful bench I came down
hither,

My trust reposing in thy noble language,
Which honours thee and whosoe'er hath
heard it.' 114

After she had discoursed with me in this wise,
With tears she turned her shining eyes to
heaven,

Whereby she made me readier still for coming. 117
So came I to thee, even as she wished me :

I uplifted thee before that fearsome creature
Which blocked thy short access to the fair
mountain. 120

Therefore, what is it ? Why, why art thou
halting ?

Why in thy heart such cowardice dost
shelter ?

Why hast thou naught of valiance and of
ardour, 123

Seeing that three such ladies, ever blessèd,
Make thee their care within the court of
heaven,

And my own words so great a boon assure
thee ? " 126

In what wise flowerets, by the nightly hoarfrost
Bent down and closed, when that the sun illumes
them,

Start up quite straight upon their stems wide
open,

129

In such wise did I with my fainting virtue :

And to my heart there ran so fine an ardour

That I began, as might a valiant person :

132

“ Oh ! pitiful is she who gave me succour,

And courteous thou, who promptly wast
obedient

Unto the words of truth she put before thee.

135

Thou hast with such desire my heart determined

By these thy words for going on this journey,

That I am turned again to my first purpose :

138

So go : for of us twain is one will only :

Guide art thou ; thou art lord ; and thou art
master.”

Thus said I : and, as soon as he had started,

141

I entered on the deep and savage pathway.

CANTO III

“ THROUGH me the road is to the city doleful :
Through me the road is to eternal dolour :
Through me the road is through the lost folk’s
dwelling : 3
Justice it was that moved my lofty Maker :
Divine Omnipotence it was that made me,
Wisdom supreme, and Love from everlasting : 6
Before me were not any things created,
Save things eternal : I endure eternal :
Leave every hope behind you, ye who enter.” 9
These words in colour dark beheld I written
Upon the topmost lintel of a gateway :
Whence I : “ Master, their sense is hard
upon me.” 12
And he to me, as one full well acquainted :
“ Here must be left behind all thought of
danger ;
Here every sort of cowardice must perish : 15
Now are we at the place wherein I told thee
That thou shalt see the folk of many dolours,
Who have lost the good that understanding
gave them.” 18
And then, his hand on mine first gently laying,

With cheerful face, wherefrom I gat me comfort,
Within, unto the secret things, he brought me. 21
Here sighs and lamentations and shrill wailings
Resounded through the air by stars unlighted ;
Wherefore I wept thereat, e'en at the outset. 24
Horrible jargons, tongues of divers peoples,
Accents of anger, words of bitter sorrow,
Shrill and faint voices, sounds of hands among
them, 27
Made a tumultuous uproar, that for ever
Eddies athwart that air's eternal blackness,
As sand when there is blast of coming whirlwind. 30
And I, who had my head begirt with horror,
Said: " Master, what is this that I am hearing ?
And what folk is't that seems so whelmed in
dolour ? " 33
And he to me : " This miserable condition
Keep the sad souls of those who in their lifetime
Were without infamy and without praises : 36
Commingled are they with that caitiff chorus
Of angels who aforetime were not rebels,
Nor faithful were to God, but stood as neutral. 39
Heaven drave them forth lest they should mar
its beauty ;

Nor doth the lower depth of hell receive them,
Since that from them the damned would gain
some glory." 42

And I : " What weighs so heavily upon them,
Master, that maketh them lament so loudly ?"
He answered : " I will tell thee very briefly : 45
These have not any hope of death to cheer them ;
And the blind life of them is so ignoble
That they are envious of all other fortune : 48
That fame of them should be the world allows
not :
Mercy and justice both alike disdain them :
Discourse we not of them, but look and pass
them." 51

And I, who looked intently, saw an ensign
That round and round so rapidly was running
That of all pause it seemed to me impatient : 54
And after it there came so long a trailing
Of folk, that I would never have believed it
That death could have undone so great a
number. 57

When I had recognised one and another,
I saw the shade of him, ay, and I knew him,
Who made from cowardice the great renounce-
ment. 60

Incontinent perceived I, and was certain,
That this before me was the crew of caitiffs,
To God and to his enemies displeasing. 63

These abject creatures, who had ne'er been living,
Were naked all, and irritated sorely
By buzzing flies and wasps, that there were
biding. 66

And these with blood made streaks upon their
faces,
Which, fallen to their feet, with tears com-
mingled,
Was gathered up by worms of loathsome
aspect. 69

And, when I had set myself to look still further,
Folk saw I at the brink of a great river :
Wherefore I said : " Master, now do thou
grant me 72

To know what sort they are, and by what order
They seem to be so eager to cross over ;
As by the feeble light I can distinguish." 75

And he to me : " The things will be apparent
To thee, what time we two shall stay our foot-
steps
By Acheron, upon its dismal margin." 78

And I thereat, with reverent eyes and downcast,
Fearing lest words of mine were irksome to him,
As far as to the stream held back from speak-
ing. 81

And lo ! towards us coming in a vessel
An old man, whom his ancient locks made
hoary,

Crying out : " Woe to you, ye souls un-
righteous ; 84
Cherish not hope of ever seeing heaven ;
Unto the other bank I come to take you,
To heat and frost, in the eternal darkness. 87
And thou, O living soul, who standest yonder,
These all are dead : depart thou from among
them."
But, when he saw that I was not departing, 90
He said : " By other road, by other ferries,
Shalt come to shore, not here to find a pas-
sage :
Behoves a lighter bark to bear thee over." 93
To him my guide : " Charon, restrain thy fury ;
Thus is it willed there where can be accom-
plished
Whate'er is willed—and further ask no question." 96
Then instantly the shaggy cheeks were quiet
Of him, the pilot of the livid marish,
Who had his eyes with wheels of flame encircled. 99
But those souls, who were weary all and naked,
Changed colour, and they clashed their teeth
together
Directly that they heard the cruel saying. 102
Blasphemed they God himself and their own
parents,
The human race, the place, the time, the
sowing

O' the seed they sprang from, and their own
 beginnings. 105

Then they retreated, one and all together,
 Bitterly weeping, to the brink accursèd
 Which for all men who fear not God is waiting. 108

Charon, the fiend, with eyes of burning charcoal,
 Beckoning them on, all in one throng collects
 them ;

And with his oar he smites whoever lingers. 111

As leaves go fluttering down in time of autumn,
 One following close the other, till the branches
 See all their spoils upon the ground together, 114

Even in such wise the evil seed of Adam
 Cast themselves one by one down from that
 margin,

Each at a sign, like bird at lure familiar. 117

They go their way thus o'er the dusky waters,
 And, ere on yonder side they are unladen,
 On this side a new troop again assembles. 120

“ My son,” thus said to me the courteous master,
 “ All those who die in purview of God's anger
 Come here together out of every country ; 123

And they are fain to pass across the river,
 Because God's justice as with spur doth urge
 them,

So that their fear is turned to inward longing. 126

Here never comes a righteous soul for passage :
 And so, if Charon makes complaint about thee,

Now well canst understand what means his
saying." 129

This being ended, all the gloomy champaign
Trembled so mightily that the remembrance
Of the affright even now with sweat doth bathe
me. 132

The tearful earth gave forth a blast that
lightened
With sudden flash, suffused with light ver-
milion,
That overcame in me all sense of feeling, 135
And I fell down like one whom slumber seizes.

CANTO IV

BROKE in my head the bonds of the deep slumber
A heavy thunder-roll, so that I started,
As doth a person who by force is wakened : 3
And my well rested eyes I cast around me,
Risen erect ; and gazed with fixed attention,
That I might know the place where I was
[] faring. 6
The truth is that I found me on the border -
That hedges in the dolorous vale abysmal,
Which gathers thunder-roll of endless wailings. 9
Dark was it and profound, and was so cloudy,
That, though I fixed my vision on the bottom,
I could not anything therein distinguish. 12
“ Now in the sightless world down here descending
We go ;” all ashy pale began the poet :
“ I will be first, and thou shalt be the second.” 15
And I, who of his hue had taken notice,
Said : “ How shall I come on, if thou art
affrighted,
Who art wont to be a comfort in my doubt-
ing ? ” 18
And he to me : “ The folk in their sore anguish
Who are here below depict upon my features

That pity which for dread thou hast mistaken. 21
Let us go on ; for the long road impels us.”
Thus set he forth, and thus he made me enter
In the first circle that the abyss engirdles. 24
Therein, so far as listening was of service,
There was no lamentation, save of sighing,
That made the eternal weight of air to quiver. 27
This came to pass from sorrow without torments,
That the crowds had, which were both great
and many,
Of little children, and of men, and women. 30
To me the master kind : “ Dost thou not ask me
What spirits these are here, whom thou beholdest ?
Now I would have thee know, ere thou go
further, 33
That they sinned not : and yet that they have
merits
Sufficeth not, because they had not baptism,
Which is a portion of the faith thou holdest : 36
And, if they were before the Christian advent,
They did not render unto God due worship.
And I of such as these myself am also. 39
For such defects, and not for other forfeit,
Are we among the lost, and only troubled
At this, that without hope we live in longing.” 42
Great grief seized on my heart when that I heard
him ;

Considering that folk of worth exceeding
 I knew of, who were hovering in that limbo. 45
 " Tell me, dear master, O my lord, pray tell me,"
 Began I, in my wishing to be certain
 Of the one faith which overcomes all error, 48
 " Went ever any hence, or by his merit,
 Or by another's, to be blest thereafter ? "
 And he, who understood my covert speaking, 51
 Made answer : " In this state I was a novice,
 When I beheld a mighty one come hither,
 With sign of victory incoronated : 54
 From hence he took the shade of the first parent,
 Of his son Abel, and the shade of Noah,
 Of Moses, lawgiver and law-abiding, 57
 The patriarch Abraham, and monarch David,
 Israel with his sire, and with his children,
 And Rachel for whose sake so much he
 laboured, 60
 And many more beside, and made them blessèd :
 And I would have thee know that not before
 them
 Did human spirits ever gain salvation." 63
 We left not going by reason of his speaking ;
 But through the wood we passed on notwith-
 standing—
 I mean the wood of multitudinous spirits. 66
 Not very far as yet our road had brought us
 This side my slumber, when I saw a burning

That overcame a hemisphere of darkness. 69
Still from it we were at some little distance,
Yet not so far but partly I distinguished
That honourable folk possessed that region. 72
“ Oh ! thou who honourest both art and learning,
Who are these yonder who have such great
honour
That from the fashion of the rest it parts
them ? ” 75
And he to me : “ The honoured reputation
Which in thy life above is sounded of them
Gains grace in heaven, which gives them such
distinction.” 78
A voice was heard by me while he was speaking :
“ Give honour to the most exalted poet :
His shade returns again, which had de-
parted.” 81
When that the voice had ceased and all was quiet,
Beheld I four great shades who came towards us :
Semblance they had nor sorrowful nor joyful. 84
The gentle master 'gan to speak in this wise :
“ Mark him who with that sword in hand is
coming
In front of other three, with lordly gesture : 87
That one is Homer, sovereign of poets :
Satirist Horace comes the next in order :
Ovid the third is, and the last is Lucan. 90
Seeing that each with me hath equal title

Unto the name the single voice hath sounded,
They do me honour, and therein do rightly." 93
Thus did I see the noble school united
Of those great lords of song the most exalted,
Which soars above the others as an eagle. 96
After they had conversed somewhile together,
They turned to me with sign of salutation ;
And seeing it my master smiled approving. 99
And greater honour still by far they did me,
For in their company they made me comrade,
So that I was a sixth 'mid such great talent. 102
Thus went we on as far as the bright shining,
Speaking of things which now to leave in silence
Is fit, as was the speaking where it happened. 105
We came unto a noble castle's basement,
That was seven times with lofty walls en-
circled,
And round about by a fine brook was guarded : 108
That, as on solid ground, did we pass over :
Through seven gates I entered with those
sages,
Arriving at a meadow of fresh verdure : 111
Therein were folk with eyes grave and slow
moving,
Of great authority in their appearance :
They spake but rarely, and with gentle voices. 114
On one side we withdrew ourselves in such wise
Upon a rising ground, well lit and open,

That they could, one and all, be seen distinctly. 117
 There, right in front, upon the green enamel
 The spirits of the mighty dead were shown
 me ;
 And I exalt myself at having seen them. 120
 I saw Electra there with many comrades,
 'Mongst whom I knew both Hector and
 Æneas ;
 Cæsar equipped for war, with eyes of falcon : 123
 I saw Camilla, and Penthesilea :
 On the other side I saw the King Latinus
 Sitting beside Lavinia his daughter : 126
 Brutus I saw, the same who drove out Tarquin,
 Lucretia, Julia, Martia, and Cornelia :
 And Saladin I saw, apart and lonely. 129
 When I had raised a little more my eyebrows,
 The master of those who know I saw before me,
 Sitting amid a philosophic household : 132
 All gaze upon him and all do him honour.
 Thereby I saw both Socrates and Plato,
 Who, before all the rest, to him stand nearest ; 135
 Democritus, who founds the world on hazard,
 Zeno, and Anaxagoras, and Thales,
 Empedocles, Diogenes, Heraclitus ; 138
 And saw the kindly gatherer of simples—
 Dioscorides I mean : and saw, too, Orpheus,
 Moralist Seneca, and Tully, and Linus, 141
 Ptolemy, Euclid the geometrician,

Averroës, who wrote the famous Comment,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna. 144

I cannot draw of all in full the picture,
Because my lengthy theme so fast doth drive
me

That ofttimes at the fact my speech is faint-
ing. 147

The six-fold company in two is parted :
By other road my sage conductor leads me
Forth from the calm into the air that quivers ; 150
And to a place I come where is no shining.

CANTO V

THUS from the primary circle I descended
Down to the second, which less space engirdles,
And so much more of woe that goads to
wailing. 3

There Minos stands and snarls with dreadful
aspect :
Of sins he makes an inquest at the entrance,
Judges, and sends according to his girdling. 6

I mean that, when the soul, born unto sorrow,
Appears before him, all things are ac-
knowledged ;
And that discerner sure of all transgressions 9
Seëth what place in hell is its fit mansion.
He with his tail so many times doth gird him
As are the stages down he wills to send it. 12

Always in front of him a throng is standing :
They go, each one in turn, unto the judg-
ment ;
They speak ; they hear ; and then they are
hurled downward. 15

“ O thou, who comest to the lodge of sorrow,”
Thus Minos spake to me, when that he saw
me,

Leaving the function of so mighty office, 18
 " Watch how thou enterest, and whom thou
 trustest :
 Let not the entry's ample space deceive
 thee."
 To him my leader : " Wherefore, pray, this
 outcry ? 21
 See that thou hinder not his destined going :
 Thus is it willed there where can be accom-
 plished
 Whate'er is willed—and further ask no
 question." 24
 Now are the doleful notes of woe beginning
 To reach my sense ; and now I am come
 thither
 Where sound of weeping manifold assails me. 27
 I came to a place that of all light is silent,
 That bellows like the sea in time of tempest,
 If it is combated by winds opposing. 30
 The infernal hurricane, that never ceases,
 Carries the spirits onward with its rapine :
 With tossing and sore smiting it afflicts them. 33
 When they arrive in face of the sheer downfall,
 There shrieking is, and moans and lamenta-
 tion :
 There they blaspheme against the power of God-
 head. 36
 I understood that unto such like torment

Are damned eternally the carnal sinners,
 Who make their reason subject to their
 passions. 39

And as their pinions bear along the starlings,
 In the chill time, in wide and full battalion,
 In such wise doth that blast the wicked
 spirits : 42

Hither and thither, up and down, it bears them ;
 Nor any hope encourages them ever,
 Not to say hope of rest, but of less torment. 45

And as cranes go, crooning their doleful dirges,
 Making a long line of themselves in heaven,
 In such wise saw I come, with drone of wail-
 ings, 48

Shades borne upon the windy strife I tell of.
 Wherefore I said : " Dear master, who are
 yonder

Folk, that in such wise the black air chastises ?" 51

" The first of those of whom thou art desirous
 To know the stories," said he to me straight-
 way,

" Of multitude of tongues was sovereign em-
 press ; 54

To vice of wantonness she was so broken
 That in her code she made all liking lawful,
 To do away the blame wherein she had fallen. 57

She is Semiramis, of whom books tell us
 That she was spouse of Ninus and successor :

She held the land the Soldan keeps in order. 60
 That other, she who slew herself love-stricken,
 And broke her troth to the ashes of Sichæus.
 Next in the line is wanton Cleopatra. 63
 See Helen, for whom time so long and guilty
 Rolled on its course: and see the great
 Achilles,
 Who at the end with love must wage his battle: 66
 Paris and Tristan see." More than a thousand
 Shades showed he me (and named them) with
 his finger,
 Whom love from this our life made take
 departure. 69
 After that I had heard my dear instructor
 Mention by name the knights and ancient
 ladies,
 Came pity, and I was, as 't were, bewildered. 72
 I thus began: "Dear poet, I would gladly
 Speak to that pair of souls who go together,
 And seem to float upon the wind so lightly." 75
 And he to me: "Thou wilt observe when nearer
 They are to us, and then do thou entreat
 them
 By the love that guides them: so they will
 come hither." 78
 As soon as unto us the wind inclined them,
 I lifted up my voice: "O souls sore troubled!
 Come, speak to us, unless One else denies it." 81

In what sort doves, by inward longing summoned

To their sweet nests, with wings upraised and steady

Come through the air, by their own will borne onward,

84

Such they, from the battalion where is Dido,
Sped, coming to us through the air malefic :
So mighty was the outcry of affection.

87

“ O living creature, gracious and benignant,
That goest through the purple air to visit
Us, who upon the world made stain ensanguined,

90

If but the King of the Universe were friendly,
We would entreat him humbly for thy welfare,

For that thou hast pity on our perverse evil.

93

Whate'er to hear and what to speak may please thee,

That we will hearken, and to you will answer,
While as the wind, as now it doth, keeps silence.

96

Lieth the land of which I was a daughter
Upon the sea-coast, where the Po goes downward

To find repose with his attendants round him.

99

Love, that at gentle breast is quickly lighted,
Caught him beside me by the form of beauty

They snatched from me : and still the way
 offends me. 102

Love, that gives no one loved reprieve from
 loving,
 Caught me by the delight of him, so mighty
 That, as thou seest, he still doth not desert
 me. 105

Love led us twain unto one death together :
 Caïna waits him who our life extinguished."
 These words from them unto our ears came
 floating. 108

Soon as I understood those souls offended,
 I bowed my face, and held it down so stead-
 fast,
 Till said to me the poet, " What art musing?" 111

When I made answer, I began, " O pity !
 What tender musings and what eager longing
 Have brought these twain unto this pass of
 sorrow." 114

With that I turned my face to them ; then
 spake I :
 And I began : " Francesca, thy sore torments
 Wring from me tears of sadness and compassion. 117

But tell me : in the time of tender sighings,
 By what and how was it that love conceded
 That ye should come to know your dubious
 longings ? " 120

And she to me : " There is no greater sorrow

Than to recall to memory times of gladness
In misery ; and that well wots thy teacher. 123
But if to have knowledge of the first enrooting
Of this our love thou hast so strong a passion,
I will as one who, weeping, tells his story. 126
One day, by way of pastime, we were reading
Of Lancelot, how love in fetters held him :
We were alone, and without thought of
danger. 129
Full often did that reading bring together
Our glances, and made colourless our visage ;
But just one point was that which overcame
us : 132
When as we read how that the smile much longed
for
Was kissed by one so passionately loving,
He who from me shall never be divided 135
Kissed me upon the mouth, all, all a-quiver :—
A Galehalt was the book and he who wrote
it :—
Upon that day we read therein no further.” 138
The while that the one spirit told this story,
The other wept so sorely that, for pity,
I swooned away as though I had been dying, 141
And fell, even as falls a lifeless body.

CANTO VI

AT the return of sense, which closed its vision
Before the piteous lot of the two kinsfolk,
That had confused me utterly with sadness, 3
New torments, and new victims of the torment,
I see around me, move I wheresoever,
Or turn, or wheresoe'er my gaze I fasten. 6
In the third circle, that of rain, I am faring,
Eternal rain, accursèd, cold, and heavy :
Measure and quality there never changes : 9
Enormous hail, and snow, and filthy water,
Down through the murky air are ever pouring :
The earth which taketh in this fall is fetid. 12
Cerberus, cruel and misshapen monster,
Barketh with triple throat in doglike fashion
Over the folk which in that place is sunken. 15
Vermilion eyes he hath, beard black and greasy,
And belly wide, and hands arrayed with talons.
The spirits he doth scratch, and flay and
quarter : 18
The pelting rain sets them like dogs a-barking :
They make the one side shelter for the other :
The wretched miscreants ! they toss for ever. 21
When Cerberus, the mighty worm, perceived us,

His mouths he opened wide, and showed his
 tushes ;
 Nor had he limb that he could keep from
 trembling. 24
 And at full span my guide stretched out his
 fingers,
 Laid hold upon the ground, and in great fist-
 fuls
 He flung it straight into the ravenous gullets. 27
 As is yon dog that barking craves a morsel,
 And then grows quiet when he sets to gnawing,—
 For his sole aim and fight are to devour it,— 30
 So did compose themselves those filthy faces
 O' the demon Cerberus, who with his clamour
 So stuns the souls they fain were deaf entirely. 33
 Over the shades we passed, that in subjection
 The heavy rain holds fast, and set our foot-
 steps
 On their vain show that seems to be a person. 36
 They on the ground were lying, all and sundry,
 Save one of them, which sudden rose up
 sitting,
 The moment that it saw us pass before it. 39
 " Oh ! thou who through this hell art being taken,
 Recognise me," it said, " if thou art able :
 Thou wert, before I ceased to be, in being." 42
 And I to it : " The anguish thou endurest
 Haply withdraws thee from my recollection,

So that it seems not that I saw thee ever : 45
But tell me who thou art, that in so doleful
A place thou art set, and at such sort of penance,
That, if some greater be, none is so irksome." 48
And it to me : " Thy city, that with envy
Is choked so full the sack o'erflows already,
Held me as hers in yonder life unclouded : 51
You citizens were used to call me Ciacco :
By reason of the belly's ruinous vices,
As thou dost see, I droop beneath the rain-
fall. 54
And, sad soul though I be, I am not single ;
For all of these to a like doom are sentenced
For a like fault : " and no word more he
uttered. 57
I answered him : " Ciacco, thy sore affliction
So weighs on me that it invites to weeping.
But tell me, if thou know'st, what they will
come to, 60
The citizens of the divided city ?
If any there is just ? And tell me also
The reason why such discord hath assailed
her." 63
And he to me : " They, after long-drawn
struggle,
Will come to bloodshed, and the rustic party
Will hunt the other out with much of insult : 66
Then shortly needs must be that this one also

Shall fall within three suns, and rise the other
 With might of one who even now is tacking : 69
 A long time shall it keep its brows exalted,
 Keeping the other under heavy burden,
 Howe'er it moans thereat and is indignant. 72
 Two just there are, but there they are not
 hearkened :
 Pride overbearing, avarice, and envy,
 Are the three sparks that set on fire their
 bosoms." 75
 Here to his tearful drone he put an ending.
 And I to him : " I still would have thee
 teach me,
 And make a gift to me of further speaking : 78
 Tegghiaio and Farinata, they so worthy,
 Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, Mosca,
 The rest who set their minds upon well-doing ; 81
 Tell me where are they, and let me recognize
 them ;
 For great desire constrains me to have know-
 ledge
 If heaven soothes them, or if hell empoisons." 84
 And he : " They 'mong the blackest souls are
 bidding :
 Guilt diverse weighs them down unto the
 bottom :
 If thou descend so far, thou there may'st see
 them. 87

But, when in the sweet world thou shalt be
 faring,
 I pray thee bring me to the mind of others :
 No more I tell thee, and no more I answer." 90
 With that his straight-set eyes askew he twisted,
 Stared at me awhile, and then his head
 bowed downward :
 With it he fell to the other blind ones' level. 93
 And said to me my guide : " No more he wakens
 On this side of the sound o' the trump angelic,
 What time the hostile magistrate comes hither : 96
 Each one shall find again his tomb of sorrow ;
 Each shall take up again his flesh and features ;
 Shall hear what doom resounds for everlasting." 99
 Thus made we traverse through the loathsome
 mingling
 Of shades and of the rain, with leisured paces,
 Touching upon the life to come a little. 102
 And thereupon I said : " Master, these torments,
 Will they increase after the last great sen-
 tence,
 Or lesser grow, or will they be as poignant ? " 105
 And he to me : " Return unto thy science,
 Which hath it that, the more a thing is per-
 fect,
 More hath it sense of good, and so of dolour. 108
 So, notwithstanding that this folk accursèd
 Never advances unto true perfection,

Yet more on that side than on this it looks
for."

111

Veering along the road we made a circuit,
Speaking a good deal more which I repeat
not.

We came unto the point where one goes
downward :

114

There found we Plutus, the great enemy, sta-
tioned.

CANTO VII

“ PAPÈ Satàn Papè Satàn aleppè,”
Plutus with voice discordant made beginning.
And that kind sage, who of all lore was master, 3
To give me comfort said : “ Thy fear need give thee
No trouble, for all power that he possesses
Shall not deprive thee of this crag for passage. 6
Then to that bloated countenance he turned
him,
And said : “ Hold thou thy peace, thou wolf
accursèd :
Inly consume thyself with thine own fury : 9
Our going to this depth lacks not occasion :
Thus is it willed in the high place, where
Michael
Wrought vengeance on the pride-begotten out-
rage.” 12
Even as sails that by the wind are bellied
Drop down entangled when the mast is broken,
In such wise fell to earth the cruel monster. 15
Thus down to the fourth hollow we descended,
Making more way along the slope of dolour,
That the whole universe’s ill empouches. 18
Justice of God ! that it can pack together

Such novel pain^s and travails as I witnessed !
And why is our own fault thus our destruc-
tion ? 21

As doth the wave above Charybdis yonder,
Which breaks upon the other it encounters,
So the folk here must in a ring go dancing. 24

Here more than elsewhere saw I folk a many
Coming with mighty howls from either quarter,
Rolling great weights by the sheer force of
breast-bone. 27

They smote each other, meeting : then each
turned him
Round on that very spot, rolling reversewise ;
Shouting : “ Why hold so tight ? ” “ Why
cast so freely ? ” 30

Thus were they turning through the gloomy circle,
On every hand, unto the point opposing,
Shouting again their old refrain of insult. 33

Then each turned back, when, through his own
half circle,
He had attained unto the other tourney.
And I, who felt, as ’t were, at heart com-
punction, 36

Said : “ My dear master, show me now, I pray
thee,
What folk is this ; and if they all were clergy,
These on our left hand with the cleric tonsure.” 39

And he to me : “ In the first life so squinteyed

They, one and all, were in their understanding
 That in their spending they observed no measure. 42
 Clearly enough the voice of them doth bark it,
 What time they reach the points upon the circle
 Where fault antagonistic doth dispart them. 45
 Clergy were these, who have no hairy cover
 On head, with popes and cardinals among them,
 Whom avarice chooses for its worst excesses." 48
 And I: "With such as these, dear Master,
 surely
 I ought to recognise among their number
 Some who were filthy with these very evils." 51
 And he to me: "Vain thought thou enter-
 tainest:
 The same unknowing life that made them
 loathsome
 Against all knowing of them now embrowns
 them. 54
 For ever they shall come to the two buffets:
 These from the tomb shall have their resur-
 rection
 With close-shut fist, and those with hair
 a-lacking: 57
 Ill-giving and ill-keeping hath deprived them
 Of the fair world, and set them to this quarrel:
 What like that is, I waste no words to adorn it. 60
 Now canst thou see, my son, how vain and short-
 lived

Are the good things committed unto fortune,
For which sake human folk set on each other. 63
For all the gold on which the moon now rises,
Or ever rose, would be quite unavailing
To set one of these weary souls at quiet." 66
"Master," I said to him, "now tell me also :
This fortune, that thou hintest at, what is it,
Which the world's goods hath so within its 69
clutches ? "

And he to me : " O ye insipid creatures,
How great the ignorance which doth oppress
you :
Now will I have thee to imbibe my doctrine. 72
That One, whose knowledge vast transcendeth
all things—
He made the heavens, and gave them one who
guides them,
So that to every quarter every quarter 75
Shines, portioning the light in equal measure.
And, similarly, over mundane splendours
He set a minister-in-chief and leader, 78
Who should transfer in time the vain possessions
From race to race, from one blood to
another,
Beyond the hindrance set by human wisdom : 81
Whence doth one race bear rule, another lan-
guish,
According to the judgment that is secret,

Even as the snake that lurks among the
herbage. 84
Your knowledge hath no place to stand against
her :
She doth foresee, she judges, and continues
Her reign, as theirs the other heavenly powers. 87
Her changes have no intervals of respite,
Necessity compels her to be speedy :
And thus they win their turn in quick succes-
sion. 90
And this is she who suffers crucifixion
Even from those who should have given her
praises,
Giving her blame unjust and evil speaking. 93
But she is inly blest, and that she hears not :
Glad with the other first-born of creation,
She rolls her sphere, and blessèd, she rejoices. 96
But now let us go down to greater anguish :
Even now each star is sinking that was rising
When I set out, and lingering is forbidden." 99
We cut the circle to the other border,
Above a bubbling spring that, overflowing,
Runs down a torrent-course deriving from it. 102
The water was by far more dark than purple ;
And we, in company of the dusky ripples,
Went in and down along a path unshapen. 105
That dismal brooklet, when it hath descended
Unto the foot of the gray slopes malignant,

Forms a morass, which Styx is designated. 108
And I, who was intent upon observing,
Saw people all bemired within that marish,
All of them naked and with look of suffering. 111
These smote, and not with hand alone, each other,
But with the head, and with the feet and
body,
Mangling each other with their teeth in piece-
meal. 114
The gentle master said : " Now see before thee,
My son, the souls of those whom anger van-
quished.
And I would have thee too believe for certain, 117
The water hath a folk beneath it, sighing,
Who make this water bubble at the surface,
As thine eye tells thee, wheresoe'er it circles. 120
Fixed in the slime they say : ' Sad were we ever
In the sweet air that by the sun is gladdened,
Bearing a sullen fume within our bosoms : 123
Now here in the black slime we nurse our sad-
ness.'
This is the hymn they gurgle in their throttle,
Because with words entire they cannot say it." 126
Thus made we circuit of the filthy channel,
A great arc's space 'twixt the dry bank and
marish,
With eyes to each mud-swallower directed. 129
And, at the last, we came beneath a tower.

CANTO VIII

I SAY, proceeding, that a good deal sooner
 Than we were at the foot of the high tower,
 Our eyes went on their way up to the summit, 3
By reason of two small flames we saw there
 starting,
 And of another, giving answering signal,
 So far away that scarce the eye could grasp
 it. 6
And turning to the sea of all discernment
 I said : " This sign, what saith it, and what
 answers
 That other fire, and who are those who make
 it ? " 9
And he to me : " Over the filthy waters
 Already canst perceive him who is looked for,
 Unless the fume of the morass doth hide
 him." 12
Never did bowstring shoot from it an arrow,
 To speed upon its course through air, so
 nimble
 As I beheld a tiny little vessel 15
Come through the water toward us at that in-
 stant,

Under the guidance of a single boatman,
Who cried aloud : " Fell soul, art now come
hither ? " 18

" Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thou criest idly,
For once : " my lord replied, " thou shalt not
have us
Longer than only while we pass the puddle." 21

Like one who listens to a great deception
That has been put on him, and then resents
it,
Phlegyas became in his concentrated anger. 24

My leader first into the boat descended,
And then close after him he made me enter.
Only when I was in it seemed it laden. 27

Soon as my guide and I were in the wherry,
Upon its way the ancient prow goes, cutting
The water deeper than 'tis wont with others. 30

While we were running o'er the lifeless channel,
One full of mud planted himself before me,
And said : " Who art thou who dost come
so early ? " 33

And I to him : " Although I come, I stay not :
But who art thou, who hast made thyself so
ugly ? "

" Thou seest that I am one who weeps," he
answered. 36

And I to him : " With weeping and with sorrow,
Remain thou by thyself, accursèd spirit :

I know thee well, albeit thou art all filthy." 39
 Then with his hands he stretched unto the
 wherry :
 Wherefore my master, wary, thrust him
 backward,
 Saying : " Go with the other dogs out
 yonder." 42
 Then with his arms about my neck he clasped me,
 And kissed my face, and said : " O ! soul dis-
 dainful,
 Blessèd is she of women who conceived thee. 45
 I' the world he was a person proud and haughty ;
 His memory hath no gentle deed's adorning ;
 Therefore his shade is here infuriated. 48
 How many count themselves up there great
 princes,
 Who here like hogs in mire shall have their
 station,
 Leaving behind them horrible reproaches ! " 51
 And I : " Dear master, I were fain exceeding
 To see him take a dip into these swillings,
 Before we from the lake have made our
 issue." 54
 And he to me : " Or e'er the shore allows thee
 To see it, thou shalt fully be contented :
 Of such desire 'tis fit thou have enjoyment." 57
 And, after that a little, such an onslaught
 I saw the miry people make upon him,

That God I still do praise, and thank him for it. 60
They all cried out : " Have at Filippo Argenti ! "
At that the Florentine fantastic spirit
Turned round, into himself his teeth to fasten. 63
There left we him : so more of him I tell not.
But in my ears a sound of dolour smote me ;
Whence I, intent, in front unbar my eyelids. 66
The kindly master said : " E'en now the city
That hath the name of ' Dis,' my son, draws
near us,
With solemn townsmen, with great troops of
people." 69
And I : " Dear master, therewithin already
Its mosques discern I plainly in the valley,—
Vermilion, even so as they had issued 72
From fire." And he to me : " The fire eternal
That fires them from within makes them glow
ruddy,
As in this lower hell thou dost perceive
them." 75
Now we arrived within the deep-sunk ditches
Which compass round that land past consolation.
The walls appeared to me as though of iron. 78
Not without making first a lengthy circuit,
We reached a place whereat the pilot loudly
Called out to us : " Go forth ! here is the
entry." 81

Above the gates I saw more than a thousand,
 Rained from the heavens above, who pas-
 sionately
 Were saying : " Who is this, that without
 dying 84
 Athwart the realm of the dead folk is faring ? "

 And my sage master thereupon made signal
 Of wishing to have word with them in secret. 87
 Then they suppressed a little their great anger,
 And said : " Come thou alone ; and go the
 other
 His way, who through this realm so rashly
 entered : 90
 Alone let him return the path of folly :
 Try if he can ; since that thou here must tarry,
 Who hast disclosed to him so dark a highway." 93
 Consider, reader, if I was disheartened
 When those accursèd words I heard resound-
 ing ;
 For never did I think to come back hither. 96
 " O my dear leader, who times more than seven
 Hast given me back security, and ta'en me
 From peril eminent that stood against me, 99
 Leave me not thus undone," I said, " behind
 thee :
 And, if to pass on further is denied us,
 Quick let us find again our tracks together." 102
 And he, that lord who thitherto had brought me,

Said to me : " Fear thou not, for none can stay
us

Upon our passage : from such source 'tis
granted. 105

But wait me here, and let thy weary spirit
Be comforted with happy hope and nourished :
For in the lower world I will not leave thee." 108

So the sweet father goes his way, forsaking
Me there, and I remain in peradventure :
For Yes and No within my head are warring. 111

I could not hear what was to them propounded ;
But not for long did he there tarry with them ;
For they raced all, pellmell, back to their
fortress. 114

They closed the portals, those our adversaries,
In my lord's face ; who stayed outside the city,
And turned him back to me with measured
paces. 117

His eyes upon the ground he had, and eyebrows
Shorn of all valiance, and with sighs was
saying :

" Who hath denied to me the homes of dolour ?" 120

And to me said : " Thou, for that I am angered,
Be not dismayed : for I shall win the essay,
Whoso for the defence within may gather. 123

Not new is this their insolence outrageous ;
For they once used it at a gate less secret,
Which to this day is found without a fastening. 126

Above that gate the scroll of death thou sawest :

E'en now, this side of it, one is descending

.The steep, escortless passing through the
circles,

129

Such that by him their city shall be opened."

CANTO IX

THE hue which cowardice had painted on me
Outwardly, when I saw my guide retreating,
The sooner checked his own, before unwonted. 3
He stopped attentive, like a man who listens ;
Because not very far the eye could take him
Through the black air and through the fre-
quent vapour. 6
“ Yet it will be our part to win the battle—”
Began he : “ If not—One there was who
offered—
Oh ! how it irks to wait the other’s coming.” 9
I took good notice in what way he covered
His first beginning with the rest that followed,
Which was in words quite different from the
former : 12
But fear his utterance gave me, notwithstanding,
Because I drew the word he left unfinished,
Perhaps, to a worse sense than he intended. 15
“ Into this depth of the sad scouring vessel
Doth any of the first stage come down ever,
Who hath the blighted hope alone for pen-
ance ? ” 18
This question asked I, and he : “ Very seldom

Doth it occur," replied to me, " that any
 Of us may make the journey I am going. 21
 True is it that I came before down hither,
 Brought by the magic of that fell Erichtho,
 Who summoned back the shades into their
 bodies. 24
 From me my flesh was but short while denuded,
 When within yonder wall she made me enter
 To bring a spirit up from Judas' circle. 27
 That is the lowest place of all, and darkest,
 And furthest from the heaven that makes all
 motion.
 I know the road well : therefore rest securely. 30
 This marsh, which doth exhale a stench so mighty,
 Begirdeth round about the city doleful,
 Where now we cannot enter without anger." 33
 And more he said, but I cannot recall it,
 Because my eyes had drawn me altogether
 Towards the lofty tower with glowing summit, 36
 Where sudden, at one instant, had uprisen
 Three hellish Furies, dyed with hue of san-
 guine,
 That had a woman's members and demeanour, 39
 And were with hydras of bright green begirded.
 Small serpents and horned snakes they had
 for tresses,
 Wherewith their fearsome temples were en-
 circled. 42

And he, who recognised quite well the hand-
maids

Of the queen of everlasting lamentation,

“ Mark closely,” said to me, “ each fierce Erinys : 45

This is Megæra on the lefthand corner ;

She who is weeping on the right Alecto ;

Tisiphone between.” With that he ended. 48

Each with her nails was rending her own bosom :

They smote themselves, and cried aloud so
shrilly

That I, mistrusting, drew beside the poet. 51

“ Bring up Medusa ! enamel we will make him,”

They all were saying, gazing down intently,

“ Ill did we not to avenge the assault of Theseus.” 54

“ Turn thyself round, and keep enclosed thy
vision :

For, if the Gorgon show, and thou behold it,

No chance e'er to return above were left us.” 57

Thus said the master, and around he turned me,

Himself ; nor to my hands so much he trusted

That with his own he did not also clasp me. 60

O ye who have your understanding healthy,

Note carefully the doctrine that is hidden

Under the veil of these mysterious verses. 63

And now was coming o'er the turbid billows

A noise the sound whereof was full of terror,

Whereat the banks on either side were
trembling ; 66

Not otherwise made than as of wind proceeding
 Impetuous from heats in opposition,
 That strikes the forest, and with no abate-
 ment 69
 Breaks off the boughs, and lays them low, and
 scatters :
 With cloud of dust in front it goes exulting,
 And the wild beasts it puts to flight and
 shepherds. 72
 My eyes he loosed, and said : " Thy nerve of vision
 Direct now over yonder foam of ages,
 In that part where that fume is most offen-
 sive." 75
 As frogs before their enemy the serpent
 Go scuttling through the water all together,
 Till every one is stooked upon the margin, 78
 So saw I ruined souls more than a thousand
 Fleeing before the face of one who forded
 The Styx at steady pace with soles unwetted. 81
 He from his countenance brushed that heavy
 vapour,
 Putting his left hand forth before him often ;
 And only of that annoyance seemed he
 weary. 84
 Well I discerned that he was sent from heaven ;
 And to the master I turned, and he made
 signal
 That quiet I should stand, and bow before him. 87

Ah, how he seemed to me to be disdainful!

He came unto the gate, and set it open

With a small wand, for it made no resistance. 90

“O despicable folk, exiled from heaven:”

Thus he began upon the dreadful threshold:

“Whence springs in you this insolence outrageous? 93

Wherefore against that will make ye resistance

Whose final purpose never can be shortened,

And which hath oftentimes increased your
dour? 96

What boots against the destinies to buffet?

Your Cerberus, if you remember rightly,

Thereby his chin and throat still carries
hairless.” 99

Then he turned back along the filthy highway,

And said no word to us, but put on semblance

Of one whom other care constrains and vexes 102

Than that concerning him who is before him.

And we towards the city moved our footsteps,

Confident following the words of blessing. 105

Therein we entered with no need of warfare:

And I, who had desire to mark and study

The sort of things that such a hold encloses, 108

When I was in, cast my eyes round about me,

And saw on every hand a spreading champaign,

Full filled with dour and accursed torment. 111

Like as at Arles, where Rhodanus is stagnant,

Like as at Pola, close by Gulf Quarnaro,
 Which shuts in Italy and bathes its borders, 114
 The sepulchres make all the place uneven,
 In such wise here on every side they made it,
 Save that the fashion of them was more
 bitter : 117
 For flames within the tombs themselves were
 scattered,
 Whereby they all were so intensely glowing
 That no art asketh more for melting iron. 120
 All of the covers of them were uplifted,
 And forth there issued such sore lamentations
 As well seemed those of wretched ones in
 suffering. 123
 And I : " What sort of folk are these, dear
 master,
 Who, being buried all within those coffers,
 Make known their presence with the sighs of
 dolour ? " 126
 And he to me : " Here are the heretic leaders,
 And all their followers of each sect, and very
 Much more than thou would'st think the
 tombs are laden. 129
 Like here with like hath burial together :
 And more or less the monuments are heated."
 And, after to the right hand he had turned him, 132
 We passed 'twixt the high buttresses and tor-
 ments.

CANTO X

Now goes his way along a secret pathway
Between the torments and the city rampart
My master ; and I follow at his shoulders. 3
“ Virtue supreme, who through these wicked circles
Dost make me turn,” began I, “ at thy
pleasure,
Speak thou to me, and satisfy my longings : 6
The folk that in the sepulchres are lying,
Could they be seen ? Already all the covers
Are raised, and there is none that keepeth
sentry.” 9
And he to me : “ All will be locked securely,
When from Jehoshaphat they come back hither,
With their own bodies they have left up
yonder. 12
Within this quarter have their cemetery
Along with Epicurus his disciples,
Who make the soul and body dead together. 15
So of the question that of me thou askest
Herewithin thou shalt soon have satisfaction,
And of the longing, too, whereof thou art
silent.” 18
And I : “ Dear leader mine, I keep not hidden

My heart from thee, except to speak more
 briefly :
 To that thou hast, not now alone, disposed
 me." 21

" Tuscan, who through the city of fire art going
 Thy way alive, speaking with such refinement,
 Be it thy pleasure in this place to tarry. 24
 Thy very speech doth manifestly prove thee
 A native born of that most noble country
 To which I, peradventure, was too troublous." 27
 Quite unexpectedly this sound had issued
 From one o' the coffers. Thereupon I drew
 me,
 Fearing, a little closer to my leader. 30
 And he to me : " Turn round : what art thou
 doing ?
 See Farinata yonder, standing upright :
 From the waist up entirely thou wilt see him." 33
 I had my eyes on his set fast already ;
 And he was throwing back his breast and
 forehead,
 As though he hell in great despite accounted. 36
 The valiant hands and ready of my leader
 Thrust me towards him through the burial
 places,
 Saying : " Now let thy words be fitly chosen." 39
 When I the foot of his own tomb had come to,
 He stared at me awhile, and then he asked me :

“ Who were thy forefathers ? ” as if disdainful. 42
 I, who was very eager to obey him,

Hid from him naught, but all to him I opened :
 Whereat he slightly lifted up his eyebrows, 45

Then said : “ To me they cruelly were adverse,
 And to my ancestors, and to my party ;
 So that two several times did I **disperse them.**” 48

“ Though hunted, they came back from every
 quarter,”

I answered him, “ both one time and the other :
 But of that art your side were never masters.” 51

Then rose into the scope of view, uncovered
 Down to the chin, a shade beside that other :
 I think that on his knees he was supported. 54

He stared hard round about me, as if a fancy
 He had to see if any one was with me.

But, after his suspense was quite extinguished, 57
 Weeping he said : “ If through this sightless
 prison

By loftiness of genius thou art going,
 Where is my son ? Why is he not beside thee ? ” 60

And I to him : “ I come not self-directed :
 He who is waiting there through here doth
 lead me ;

Whom, haply, in disdain your Guido ac-
 counted.” 63

His words, and the fit manner of his penance,
 Had read to me the name of him already,

And therefore was my answer made so fully. 66
 Suddenly risen up, he cried : " How said'st thou ?
 That he ' accounted ' ? Is he not still living ?
 Doth the sweet light not beat upon his eye-
 lids ? " 69
 When he perceived some little hesitation
 That I was showing prior to my answer,
 He fell supine, and showed outside no longer. 72
 But the other high-souled one, at whose ap-
 pointing
 I had made halt, changed not a whit his
 aspect,
 Nor did he move his neck, nor bend his body. 75
 " And if "—with his first utterance proceeding—
 " If they," he said, " have learned that art
 so badly,
 More than this bed itself doth that torment
 me ; 78
 But less than fifty times shall be relighted
 That lady's face who here is sovran ruler,
 When thou shalt know the load that art im-
 poses. 81
 And, so may'st thou to the sweet world have
 regress,
 Tell me why is that people so relentless
 Against my side in all its ordinances." 84
 And I to him : " The carnage and great slaughter
 That made the colour of the Arbia sanguine

Hath caused such orisons within our temple." 87
After he, sighing deep, his head had shaken,
" There was I not alone," he said, " nor, surely,
Without good cause would I have moved with
th' others ; 90
But there was I alone, where the proposal
To do away with Florence was accepted
By all, the one who was her open champion." 93
" Ah ! so may sometime rest your seed in quiet,"
I begged of him, " for me that knot unfasten,
Which here hath quite entangled my opinion. 96
It seems that you can see, if I hear rightly,
Beforehand what the course of time brings
with it,
And take another course as to the present." 99
" We see, like one who has defective vision,
The things,' he said, " which are at greater
distance.
So much the Guide Supreme still beams upon
us. 102
When they draw near, or are, our understanding
Is all in vain ; and, if no other brings it,
Nothing we know about your human matters : 105
Therefore can'tst comprehend that altogether
Dead will our knowledge be after that moment
When shall be shut the portal of the future." 108
With that, as feeling for my fault compunction,
I said : " Then you will tell him fallen yonder

- His son is still in converse with the living. 111
 And, if before the answer I was silent,
 I did so, let him know, because my thinking
 Was still in the mistake whence you have
 loosed me." 114
- My master was recalling me already ;
 Wherefore more instantly I prayed the spirit
 To tell me who it was that there was with him. 117
 He said to me : " Beside more than a thousand
 I lie : within here is the Second Frederic ;
 The Cardinal also : of the rest I am silent : " 120
 Then hid himself. And I towards the ancient
 Poet turned back my steps, intently thinking
 Upon that speech which seemed to me un-
 friendly. 123
- He started on ; and then, thus going forward,
 He said to me : " Why art thou so bewildered ?"
 And to his quest I gave him satisfaction. 126
 " See that thy mind hold fast what thou hast
 hearkened
 Against thyself : " thus did the sage command
 me :
 ' Now give attention here : ' and raised his
 finger : 129
- " When thou shalt be before the sweet effulgence
 Of her to whose fair eye all things are open,
 From her shalt know concerning thy life's
 journey." 132

Then to the left hand soon he turned his foot-
steps.

We left the wall, and went towards the centre,
Along a path that strikes into a valley 135
That made its stench even up there unpleasant.

CANTO XI

UPON a high embankment's extreme limit,
 Made by great shattered rocks disposed in
 circle,
 We came upon a crueller collection : 3
And there impelled by the exceeding horror
 Of the stench that the profound abyss dis-
 charges,
 We drew ourselves up close behind a cover 6
Of a great tomb, whereon I saw a writing
 That said : " Pope Anastasius here I prison,
 Him whom Photinus from the straight way
 tempted." 9
" Our going down must needs be now retarded,
 That first the sense may use itself a little
 To the dismal blast : and then will be no
 heeding : " 12
The Master thus : and I : " Some compensa-
 tion,"
 Said to him, " find, so that not wholly wasted
 The time may pass." And he : " Lo, that I
 ponder. 15
My son, there are within these rocks' enclosure,"
 Began he then to say, " three lesser circles,

Falling from step to step, like those thou art
 leaving : 18
 They all are brimful of accursèd spirits.
 But, that henceforth sight only may suffice
 thee,
 Learn in what way they are constrained and
 wherefore. 21
 All wickedness that lays up hate in heaven
 Injustice hath for end, and such end alway,
 Either by force or fraud, afflicts another : 24
 But, seeing that fraud is man's peculiar evil,
 More it displeases God : therefore are lowest
 The fraudulent, and greater woe assails them. 27
 Wholly of the violent is the first circle :
 But, seeing that force is done unto three
 objects,
 It in three Rounds is ordered and constructed. 30
 To God, and to one's self, and to one's neighbour,
 Force may be done—I mean to things and
 persons,
 As thou shalt hear with argument explicit. 33
 Death wrought by force and grievous wounds
 are given
 Unto one's neighbour ; and unto his having
 Destruction, fire, and ruinous exactions : 36
 Whence homicides, and whoso smites unfairly,
 Plunderers, men of prey—all these in torment

- Keeps the first Round, in divers troops
divided. 39
- Man may upon himself and his possessions
Lay violent hand : and therefore in the second
Round must repent without the hope of profit 42
- Whoso deprives himself of your world's being,
Or wastes at play and squanders his resources,
And there finds weeping where he should be
joyful. 45
- Force may be done, as it regards the Godhead,
By inwardly denying, and blaspheming,
And by contemning nature and its bounty. 48
- And therefore doth the smallest Round make imprint
Of its own seal on Sodom and on Cahors,
And whoso, God contemning, inly whispers. 51
- Fraud, wherewithal is bitten every conscience,
A man may use regarding one who trusts him,
Or one who has no store of trust to deal with. 54
- This latter way, as it would seem, slays only
The tie of love that nature itself fashions ;
Whence make their nest within the second
circle 57
- Hypocrisy, smooth speeches, and bewitchment,
Forgery, thieving, and the sin of Simon,
Panders, and jobbers, and the like offscouring. 60
- By the other way both is that love forgotten
Which nature makes, and that which then is
added,

From which the trust especial is created. 63
 Whence in the smallest circle, where the centre
 Is of the universe, where Dis is seated,
 Whoso betrayeth is consumed for ever." 66
 And I: "Thy argument quite plain, dear
 master,
 Proceeds so far, and doth quite well distinguish
 This gulf, and all the people that possess it : 69
 But tell me—those within the slimy marish,
 Those the wind beareth, those the rain doth
 beat on,
 And those who with such bitter tongues en-
 counter, 72
 Why are they not within the ruddy city
 In punishment, if God hath them in anger ?
 And, if he hath not, why is such plight assigned
 them ? " 75
 And he to me : " Why is thy wit thus raving
 So far astray from what it is accustomed ?
 Or, haply, elsewhere is thy mind regarding ? 78
 Dost thou not call those words to thy remem-
 brance,
 Wherein thy Ethic treats with so much
 fullness
 The dispositions three that heaven will none
 of ; 81
 Incontinence, and viciousness, and senseless
 Brutishness ; and how less offends the Godhead

- Incontinence, and how less blame it borrows ? 84
 If thou wilt well give heed to this opinion,
 And bring unto thy mind who are those others,
 Who higher, outside these walls, endure their
 penance, 87
 Well wilt thou see why they are from these felons
 Set separate, and why less fiercely angered
 Justice divine doth smite them with its
 hammer." 90
 " Oh ! sun, who makest whole all troubled vision,
 Thou dost content me so when thou resolvest
 That doubt is joy to me, no less than know-
 ledge, 93
 Again retrace," I said, " thy steps a little
 To where thou say'st that usury is offensive
 To Divine goodness, and the knot unravel." 96
 " Philosophy, to whoso understands it,
 Doth note," he said, " not in one chapter only,
 How nature takes her course from the ex-
 ample 99
 Of the intellect divine, and of its method.
 And, if thou notest well the master's Physic,
 There thou wilt find, not after many pages, 102
 That your own art, so far as it is able,
 Follows her, as his master doth the learner ;
 So that your art to God is as a grandchild. 105
 From these two, if thou bring'st to recollection
 Genesis at its opening, it must needs be

That folk do take their living and make
progress.

108

And, since the usurer keeps another pathway,
Nature, both for herself and for her daughter,
Contemns he, since his hope elsewhere he
places.

111

But follow me, for now I would be going :

For over the horizon glide the Fishes,

And o'er the North-west all the Wain is lying,

114

And yonder far must we climb down the ledges."

CANTO XII

THE place we came on to descend the margin
Was alpine, and, from what was there, such also
That any sight thereof would be repellent : 3
As is that downfall, which Adigè, smiting,
Wrought on the flank on hither side of Trenta,
Either from earthquake or unsure foundation— 6
For from the mountain summit, whence it
started,
Down to the plain the rock is so disrupted
That it would give sure path to any above it— 9
Such of that rugged chasm was the descending :
And right upon the edge o' the broken basin
The infamy of Crete outstretched was lying, 12
Which was conceived in the fictitious heifer.
And he gan bite himself, when as he saw us,
Even as a man whom wrath consumeth inly. 15
My leader sage cried out towards him : “ Haply
Thou thinkest that here comes the Duke of
Athens,
Who in the world above brought death to
meet thee. 18
Take thyself off, thou beast, for this one comes
not

Well tutored and instructed by thy sister,
But goes his way your penances to witness." 21
As is yon bull that but then breaks his tether
When he already hath received the death-
blow—
Nor can he run, but to and fro he plunges— 24
I saw the Minotaur do in like fashion.
And he cried, wary: "Run unto the passage;
'Tis well to get thee down while he is
frenzied." 27
Thus did we take our way down through the
unlading
Of those great stones, which were in frequent
movement
Under my feet from the unwonted burden. 30
I fared on, musing: and he said: "Thou
musest
Haply upon this downfall which is guarded
By yonder bestial wrath I now extinguished. 33
Now I would have thee know that, when I hither
Into hell's depths that other time descended,
This mass of rock was not yet fallen in ruin. 36
But certainly, if I can well distinguish,
A short while ere He came, who the great
booty
Rescued from Dis for the supernal circle, 39
On every side the deep and loathsome valley
So quaked I thought the universe was thrilling

With love, whereby, as there are some who
 fancy, 42
 The world has oftentimes been turned to chaos.
 And this primeval rock just at that moment
 Here and elsewhere made such an overturning. 45
 But fix thine eyes below thee : for the river
 Of blood is drawing near, wherein is seething
 Whoso by violence doth hurt to others." 48
 Oh, blind cupidity ! Oh, senseless anger,
 Which in the brief life spurs us on so hotly,
 And in the eternal then so sadly dips us ! 51
 I saw a ditch, bent in an arc and ample,
 And so that it embraces all the champaign,
 According well with what my escort told me. 54
 And 'twixt the foot o' the bank and it were
 running
 Centaur in single file, equipped with arrows,
 As they were wont i' the world to go a-hunting. 57
 Seeing us coming down, every one halted ;
 And from the troop three of them made a
 sally,
 With bows and darts they had already chosen. 60
 And from afar one cried : " Unto what torment
 Come ye who are descending thus the hillside ?
 Speak where ye are : if not, I shoot the
 arrow." 63
 My master said : " Ourselves will give the
 answer

To Chiron over yonder at close quarters :
To thine own grief thy will was aye so hasty." 66
Then touched he me, and said : " That one is
Nessus,
Who died for sake of the fair Deianira,
And vengeance for himself himself exacted. 69
And he between, who on his breast is gazing,
Is the great Chiron, he who nursed Achilles ;
Pholus, who was so full of wrath, the other. 72
Around the ditch they go, thousand by thousand,
Aiming their shafts at every soul emerging
More from the blood than what his fault allots
him." 75
We made approach unto those nimble monsters :
Chiron an arrow took, and with the notching
Thereof he trimmed his beard behind the
jawbones. 78
When his great mouth he had to sight uncovered,
He said to his companions : " Have you
noticed
That he who is behind moves what he touches ? 81
The feet of dead men are not wont to do so."
And my good guide, who to his breast already
Was come, where the two natures are con-
sorted, 84
Replied : " He lives indeed : and, solitary
Thus, 'tis my part to show him the dark
valley :

Necessity doth bring him here, not pastime. 87
 One came straight down from singing Alleluia,
 Who unto us committed this new office :
 No thievish soul am I, nor he a robber. 90
 But by that selfsame virtue, by whose power
 I move my steps along so wild a highway,
 Give to us one of thine, in whose close keeping 93
 To go, and who may point us out the fording,
 And who may carry him upon his crupper ;
 For he is not a spirit to walk on vapour." 96
 Upon his right breast wheeling, Chiron turned
 him,
 And said to Nessus : " Back, and so conduct
 them ;
 And clear the way, if other troop doth meet
 you." 99
 We started on, we and our trusty escort,
 Along the shore of that vermilion boiling,
 Wherein the boiled were making shrieks of
 anguish. 102
 I saw folk underneath, up to the eyebrow ;
 And the great Centaur said : " Those there are
 tyrants,
 Who dealt in blood and in the fruits of rapine : 105
 There are bemoaned the pitiless despoilings :
 Fierce Dionysius, who years of dolour
 Caused Sicily, is there, and Alexander : 108
 And yonder brow, that has the hair so swarthy,

Is Azzolin : that other, who is flaxen,
Obizzo of Estè, who, of very surety, 111
Up in the world was stifled by his stepson."
Then turned I to the poet, and thus spake he :
" Now be he first to thee, and I the second." 114
A little further on the Centaur halted
Over a folk, that, far as to the gullet,
It seemed were from that boiling stream
emerging. 117
A shade he showed us in a corner, lonely,
Saying : " He yonder smote within God's
bosom
The heart that still upon the Thames is
cherished." 120
Then saw I folk that clear from out the river
Held up the head, and all the chest moreover :
And not a few I recognised amongst them. 123
Thus, ever more and more, receded lower
That blood, so that the feet alone it covered :
And there across the ditch we had our
passage. 126
" Exactly as thou seest in this quarter
The boiling stream, that groweth still more
scanty,"
The Centaur said, " this I would have thee
credit, 129
That on this other deeper still and deeper
It dips its bed, until at last it reaches

The place where tyranny must needs make
mourning. 132

Justice divine in yonder part is goading
That Attila, on earth the scourge of nations,
Pyrrhus, and Sextus, and draws out for ever 135

The tears that it unlocketh with the boiling
From Rinier of Corneto, and Rinier Pazzo,
Who waged so great a war upon the high-
ways." 138

At that he turned him, and repassed the shallow.

CANTO XIII

Nor yet had Nessus reached the further margin
 When we set out into a tract of woodland
 That was not marked at all by any pathway. 3
Not verdant twigs, but of a dusky colour,
 Not lissome boughs, but full of knots and
 tangled,
 Not apples were therein, but thorns with
 poison. 6
Brambles so dense have not, nor yet so bristly.
 Those savage animals that hold in hatred
 The well-tilled fields 'twixt Cecina and Cor-
 neto. 9
Therewithin make their nests the loathsome
 Harpies,
 Who from the Strophades drave forth the
 Trojans
 With dismal tidings of the harm to follow. 12
Wide wings they have, and necks and faces
 human,
 And feet with claws, and the broad belly
 feathered :
 On the strange trees they utter sounds of
 mourning. 15

And the good Master : " Ere thou enter further,
 Know thou that in the second Round thou
 art faring,"
 Began to say to me, " and wilt continue, 18
 Until thou come upon the dreadful sand-plain.
 Therefore take careful heed, so shalt thou
 witness
 Things that would take all faith from my dis-
 coursing." 21
 I, on all sides, was ware of drone of wailings,
 And did not see a person who might make it ;
 Wherefore, bewildered utterly, I halted. 24
 I think that he had thought that I was thinking
 That 'mongst those trunks such sound of
 voices issued
 From folk who on account of us were hiding. 27
 Therefore the Master said : " If thou wilt only
 Break some small twig from any of these
 bushes,
 The thoughts thou hast will prove themselves
 quite cripple." 30
 With that I put my hand a little forward,
 And gathered from a great blackthorn a
 branchlet :
 And its stem cried aloud : " Why dost thou
 rend me ? " 33
 When it became embrowned with blood that
 trickled,

It 'gan again to cry : " Why dost thou tear me ?
Hast thou not any spirit at all of pity ? 36
Men were we once, but now are turned to
 brambles :
 Thy hand might very well have been more
 kindly,
 If we had only been the souls of serpents." 39
As out of a green branch which may be burning
 At one end, and is dripping at the other,
 And hisses with the wind that is escaping, 42
So from the broken splinter forth there issued
 Together words and blood : whence I the
 twig-top
 Let fall, and stood as stands a man affrighted. 45
" If he could have believed in the first instance,
 Thou wounded soul," my leader sage made
 answer,
 " What he hath seen, with aid but of my verses, 48
He would not have outstretched his hand upon
 thee.
 But the thing past belief made me induce him
 To do a deed that on myself weighs heavy. 51
But tell him who thou wert, so that, instead of
 Any amends, he thy renown may freshen
 I' the world above, where to return is given
 him." 54
And the stem : " With soft speech dost so
 entice me,

I cannot hold my peace ; nor let it vex you
 That I a little am snared in conversation. 57
 He am I who of both the keys was keeper
 Of Frederic's breast, and who so gently
 turned them,
 In locking and unlocking, that I banished, 60
 So to say, all men from his inmost counsel.
 Fealty I bore to my illustrious office,
 So much that I thereby lost sleep and vigour. 63
 The courtezan who from the lodge of Cæsar
 Never diverted yet her eyes of wanton—
 That common death, and vice of courtly
 dwellings— 66
 Inflamed the minds of every one against me ;
 And the inflamed ones so inflamed Augustus
 That my glad honours turned to dismal
 sorrows. 69
 My mind, incited by disdainful savour,
 And thinking to escape disdain by dying,
 Against my just self made me do injustice. 72
 By the new roots of this poor piece of timber
 I never broke my fealty—I swear it—
 Unto my lord, so worthy of all honour. 75
 If either one of you the world revisits,
 Let him sustain my memory, which prostrate
 Still lies beneath the blow that envy gave it." 78
 Awhile he waited ; then : " Since he is silent,"
 The poet said to me, " lose not the occasion,

But speak, and ask of him, if more doth
please thee." 81

Whence I to him : " Nay, do thou ask him
further
Of what thou think'st would give me satis-
faction :

For I could not : such pity doth oppress me." 84

Therefore he gan again : " So may this mortal
Do for thee freely what thy speech doth pray
him,
Spirit imprisoned, still be it thy pleasure 87
To tell us how the soul is held in bondage
Within these knots, and tell us, if thou
art able,
If any from such limbs is ever loosened." 90

Then the stem breathed a mighty breath, and,
after,
That wind was turned into such voice as
follows :

" Briefly to you an answer shall be given : 93
When the inhuman soul departeth, leaving
The body whence it plucked itself asunder,
Minos commits it to the seventh gullet : 96
It falls i' the wood : no part for it is chosen :
But in what place soever fortune shoots it,
There doth it germinate, like seed of barley : 99
It rises up in sprout and in wild sapling :
The Harpies, feeding then upon its leafage,

Bring sorrow, and an outlet to the sorrow. 102
We for our spoils shall come, just as the others ;
Yet may not any be therewith revested :
For 'tis not just to have what is discarded. 105
Here shall we drag them, and all through the
mournful
Wood will the bodies of us be appended,
Each on the thornbush of the shade it bur-
dened." 108
We still were on the stem intently waiting,
Thinking that something more it wished to
tell us,
When by a noise we unawares were taken, 111
Even in such wise as one who is aware of
The boar and hunt coming where he is posted,
Who hears the beasts and crashing of the
branches. 114
And lo ! upon the left-hand side a couple,
Naked and scratched, fleeing so vehemently
They broke the wood's entanglements asunder, 117
The foremost one : " Now hasten ! Death !
Oh, hasten ! "
The other one, whose pace appeared too lag-
gard,
Was crying out : " Oh ! Lano, not so clever 120
Thy legs were at the joustings of the Toppo."
And then he, for perchance his breath was
failing,

A group made of himself and of a briar. 123
In rear of them the wood was full of she-dogs,
All black, and ravenous, and swiftly running,
Like greyhounds that have issued from their
leashes. 126
On that one who had crouched their teeth they
fastened,
And him they rended, bit by bit, in pieces ;
Then carried they away those smarting
members. 129
Then straightway by the hand my escort took
me,
And led me to the briar, which was wailing
Through every bleeding rupture, to no pur-
pose. 132
" Oh ! Jacomo," it said, " of Saint Andrea,
To make a screen of me what did it boot thee ?
What fault have I, in all thy guilty lifetime ? " 135
When he was standing over it, the Master
Said : " Who wast thou, who now, through
points so many,
A dolorous discourse with blood art sighing ? " 138
And he to us : " Oh ! souls who are come
hither
To witness the abominable outrage
That hath from me my twigs thus disunited, 141
Pray, at the foot of the sad bush collect them.
I of that city was, which for the Baptist

Changed its first patron ; whence he, for
that reason, 144
Will make it ever sad with his devices.
And, were it not that on the pass of Arno
Unto this day remains of him some semblance, 147
Those citizens who laid its new foundations
On what from Attila remained of ashes
Had undertaken all in vain their labour. 150
Of my own house I made myself a gibbet."

CANTO XIV

BECAUSE the warm affection for my birthplace
 Moved me, I brought the scattered twigs
 together,
 And gave them back to him who now was
 voiceless. 3

Thence came we to the confine, where is parted
 The third Round from the second, and where
 plainly
 Is seen a horrible device of justice. 6

Of the new things to make clear exposition,
 I say that we arrived at a great barren,
 That from its bed doth every plant extirpate. 9

The dolorous wood is unto it a garland
 Around, as unto that the ditch of sadness.
 Thereby we stayed our steps, skirting the
 border. 12

The ground was one great plain of sand, and
 arid
 And thick, and in no other sort was fashioned
 Than that which once was pressed by feet of
 Cato. 15

Vengeance of God! In what great fear and
 trembling

Should'st thou be held by each who reads the
story
Of that which to my eyes was manifested. 18
Of flocks of naked souls I saw great number,
Who all were very miserably weeping :
And different law, it seemed, to them was
given. 21
One folk supine upon the ground was lying ;
One with the body all crouched up was
sitting ;
Another was continually moving. 24
That which was going round was more in
number ;
And that was less which lay before the
torment,
But to the mourning had the tongue more
loosened. 27
Over the whole expanse of sand were raining
Dilated flakes of fire in gradual downpour,
Like as of snow on alp when wind is absent. 30
As Alexander, in those torrid regions
Of India, beheld above his cohorts
Flames falling even to the ground unbroken ; 33
Wherefore he took good heed the soil to trample
With his battalions, seeing that the vapour
Better was quenched whileas it still was single ; 36
In such wise was the eternal heat descending,
Whereby the sand was catching fire, as tinder

Under the steel, for doubling of the dolour. 39
Without a respite ever was the waving
Of wretched hands, now hither and now
thither,
Shaking from off themselves the fresh fallen
scorching. 42
Thus I began : " Dear master, thou who victor
Art over all things save the sullen demons
Who at the gate's ingoing came forth to meet
us, 45
Who is yon mighty one, who for the burning
Seems not to care, and lies with scowl disdainful,
So that the rain seems not to make him mellow ?" 48
And he himself, who had become acquainted
That I was questioning my guide about him,
Cried out : " Such am I, dead, as I was, living : 51
Though Jove should tire his smith from whom he
wrested,
With kindled wrath, the piercing bolt of
thunder,
Wherewith upon that last day I was smitten, 54
Or though he tire the others in succession
At the black smithy down in Mongibello,
Calling aloud, ' Good Vulcan, help me, help
me,' 57
Just as he once did at the fight of Phlegra,
And shoot at me with all his might his
arrows,

Still could he not achieve a welcome ven-
 geance." 60
 At that my leader spoke with so much vigour
 That I so forcible had never heard him :
 " O Capaneus, in that thine arrogancy 63
 Is not abated thou art more sorely punished.
 No sort of torment, saving for thy frenzy,
 Would to thy fury be perfected dolour." 66
 With kinder face then turned he towards me,
 saying :
 " Of the seven kings who leaguered Thebes, he
 yonder
 Was one ; and held, and as it seems, holds ever, 69
 God in disdain, and seems to account him little.
 But, as I told him, his own insolences
 Are fit enough adornments for his bosom. 72
 Now come thou after me, and still be heedful
 That in the scalding sand thy feet thou set not,
 But keep them always close beside the wood-
 land." 75
 Holding our peace we came to where there gushes
 Forth from the wood a tiny little streamlet,
 Whereof the ruddy hue still makes me shudder. 78
 As from the Bulicame a brooklet issues,
 Which then the sinful women part among
 them,
 So that one through the sand was wending
 downward. 81

The bed thereof, and both the slanting borders,
Were turned to stone, and at the side the margins;
Whence I discerned that that way lay the
passage. 84

“ ’Mongst all the other things that I have shown
thee,
Since that we made our entrance by the portal
Whereof the threshold is denied to no one, 87
Not one thing by thine eyes has been distin-
guished
So noteworthy as is this stream here present,
Which o’er itself doth deaden all the flamelets.” 90

Such were the very words my leader uttered :
Wherefore I prayed him to bestow the dainty
For which he had bestowed on me the longing. 93

“ In the mid sea there lies a wasted country,”
He straightway said, “ which hath the name
of Creta,
Under whose king the world was chaste afore-
time. 96

Therein a mountain is, which once was joyful
With brooks and leafy boughs, and was called
Ida.
Now, like a thing worn out, it is deserted. 99

Rhea once chose it for the trusty cradle
Of her young son, and, better to conceal him
What time he wept, she there made raise
loud outcries. 102

Within the mount stands straight a mighty
 Ancient,
 Who holds his shoulders turned toward
 Damietta,
 And gazes upon Rome as on his mirror. 105
 Of gold refined the head of him is fashioned,
 And of pure silver are his arms and bosom :
 Thence is he brass as far as to the forking : 108
 Downward from there is all of chosen iron,
 Save that the right foot is of clay fire-hardened.
 On that he stands, more than the other,
 upright. 111
 Each part, except the gold, is broke asunder
 By a fissure, whence continual tears are
 dripping,
 That, gathered, bore a passage through that
 cavern. 114
 Their course through rocky paths attains this
 valley :
 Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon first making,
 They go their way adown through this strait
 conduit 117
 Till they arrive where is no more descending.
 They make Cocytus ; and what-like that
 marsh
 Thyself shalt see ; therefore not here the
 telling." 120
 And I to him : " This rivulet here present,

If it deriveth from our world in such wise,
Why only at this brink is it apparent ? ” 123
And he to me : “ The place is round, thou
knowest :
And, albeit thou art come much distance,
bearing
Ever to left, descending towards the bottom, 126
Thou hast not yet turned round through all the
circles.
And therefore, if some new thing shew before
us,
It should not to thy countenance bring wonder.’ 129
And I again : “ Master, where then are Lethè
And Phlegethon ? For thou of one art silent
And say’st that of that rain is made the other.” 132
“ In all thy questions thou dost surely please me,”
He answered, “ but the ruddy water’s boiling
Should well resolve the one that thou art
asking. 135
Lethè shalt see, but from this pit far distant,
There where the souls go for their purifying,
When fault repented of is not imputed :” 138
Then said : “ It is high time to take departure
Out of the woodland : see thou come behind
me.
The margins make a way ; they are not
scalded, 141
And over them all vapour is extinguished.”

CANTO XV

Now bears us onward one of the hard margins,
And overhead the brooklet's fume o'er shadows,
So saving from the fire the banks and water. 3
Such as the Flemings, 'twixt Witsand and Bruges,
Fearing the flood that hurls itself towards
them,
Make the great dike, to force the sea's retreat-
ment, 6
And as the Paduans along the Brenta,
For surety of their villas and their castles,
Ere Chiarentana feels the heat of summer, 9
After no other pattern those were fashioned ;
For all that not so high, nor yet so solid,
The master, whosoe'er he was, had made
them. 12
We were so far already from the woodland,
That I could not have seen where it was lying,
Though I had turned me round upon my
footsteps, 15
When with a troop of souls we made encounter,
Coming along the bank, and each was staring
Intent at us, as men are wont at even 18
'Neath the new moon to gaze at one another :

And so towards us puckered they their eye-brows
As an old tailor doth before a needle. 21
I, being eyed by such a family thus-wise,
Was recognised by one of them, who caught
me
By the coat-hem, and cried : " What marvel
have we ! " 24
And I, when he thus stretched his arm towards
me,
Fastened my eyes upon his fire-baked aspect,
So that the scorched face did not prohibit 27
His recognition to my understanding :
And, lowering my hand unto his forehead,
I made reply : " Are you here, Ser Brunetto ? " 30
And he : " My son, oh, let it not displease thee
If Brunetto Latini shall a little
Go back with thee, and let the file go forward." 33
I said to him : " With all my might I pray you :
And, if you wish that I sit down beside you,
I will, if he consents with whom I journey." 36
" My son," he said, " who of this flock soever
An instant stops, a hundred years lies prostrate,
Forbid to fan when the fire beats upon him. 39
Therefore go on : I at thy skirts will follow,
And afterwards I will rejoin my party,
Which goes bemoaning its eternal losses." 42
I did not dare step down from off the roadway
To go upon his level, but bent downward

I held my head, as one who walks in worship. 45

And he began : " What destiny or fortune

Before thy final day brings thee down hither ?

And who is this who points thee out the high-
way ? " 48

" In the fair life serene, above there yonder,"

I answered him, " I strayed within a valley,
Before my age had yet attained its fullness : 51

But yestermorn I turned my shoulders on it ;
He appeared to me when thitherward re-
turning :

And now he leads me home along this path-
way." 54

And he to me : " If thou thy star dost follow,
Thou canst not fail to reach the glorious
haven,

If I in the fair life had clear discernment. 57

And, if it had not been I died so early,
Seeing that heaven to thee was so benignant,
Support would I have given thee for thy
labours. 60

But that ungrateful and malignant people,
That in old time from Fiesolè descended,
And savour still of mountain and of granite, 63

For thy good deeds will make themselves thy
foemen :

And it is right : for 'mid the sour crab-apples
That the sweet fig should fruit is unbecfitting. 66

Ancient repute i' the world doth call them
purlind,
Covetous folk, and envious, and haughty ;
Take heed that clean thou wipe thee from
their customs : 69

Thy fortune doth reserve thee for such honour
That one side and the other will be hungry
For thee : but far from goat shall be the
pasture. 72

The beasts of Fiesolè ! let them make litter
Of their own selves, and with the stem not
meddle,
If any springeth still upon their dunghill, 75
Wherein the holy seed of those old Romans
May come to life again, who there continued,
What time the nest was built of so great
mischief." 78

" If that my prayer had been fulfilled entirely,"
I answered him, " you had not yet been
banished
Beyond the limits set for human nature : 81
For in my mind is fixed, and now oppresses
My heart, the dear and kind paternal image
Of you, when in the world you used to teach
me, 84

Hourly, how man may make himself immortal.
And while I live, in what regard I hold it
Must ever by my tongue be manifested. 87

That which you tell me of my course, I write it,
 And keep with other text for exposition
 By a lady who can make it, if I reach her. 90

Only I wish made known to you for certain,
 Provided that my conscience do not chide me,
 I am prepared for fortune at her pleasure. 93

Not novel to my ears is such an earnest :
 Therefore let fortune set her wheel a-spinning
 As pleaseth her, and peasant wield his mat-
 tock." 96

Over the right cheek thereupon my master
 Turned backward, and set fast his gaze upon
 me :
 Then said : " He listens well who notes the
 matter." 99

Yet none the less I go my way conversing
 With Ser Brunetto ; and who are, I ask him,
 His comrades the most famous and the
 highest. 102

And he to me : " Of some, 'tis good to know them :
 O' the rest 't will be praiseworthy to be silent,
 For short would be the time for such a
 sounding. 105

In sum, know thou that all of them were clerics
 And men of letters, great and of great credit,
 All in the world by one same sin polluted. 108

Priscian with yonder abject crowd is going
 His way, and Francis of Accorso also :

And, if to see such scabs hadst had a craving, 111
Thou might'st see him who by the servants'
servant

From Arno to Bacchilion was translated ;
And there he left behind his sin-strained sinews. 114
More would I tell of, but my speech and coming
Cannot be more prolonged, because I yonder
Espy a new smoke rising from the sand-plain : 117
Yon come a folk with which I may not consort.

Commended to thy care be my ' Tesoro,'
In which I still do live, and more I ask not." 120
Then turned he, and was, in seeming, of the
runners

Who run the green-cloth races at Verona
Across the meadows ; and of those, in
seeming, 123
Was he who wins, and not the one who loses.

CANTO XVI

ALREADY was I where the boom resounded
Of water that to the next Round was falling, •
Just like the sound that beehives make of
humming ; 3
When sudden broke away three shades together,
Running from out a troop that there was
passing
Under the rain of the atrocious torment. 6
They came towards us, and each one made out-
cry :
“ Halt there, thou who hast by thy dress the
semblance
Of being some one of our wicked country.” 9
Ah me ! what wounds I saw, both old and
recent,
Upon their members, branded by the fireflakes :
Still doth it grieve me, if I but recall it. 12
My teacher at their outcries stood attentive ;
He turned his face toward me, and : “ Wait
a moment ; ”
He said, “ to them ’tis fitting to be courteous : 15
And, if it were not for the fiery arrows
Shot by the place’s nature, I would tell thee

It better suited thee than them to hurry." 18
Began they then again, as we too halted,
The old refrain: and soon as they had
reached us,
Formed themselves in a wheel, all three
together. 21
As champions wont to do, stripped and anointed,
Considering their grip and their advantage,
Before they come to mutual blows and
thrustings, 24
In such wise, wheeling, each of them his visage
Raised up to me, so that his neck was making,
Reversewise to his feet, continual journey. 27
"And if the misery of this place unstable
Brings to disdain both us and our entreaties,"
Began one, "and our singed and swarthy aspect, 30
Let our renown be to thy mind incentive
To tell us who thou art, who, thus undaunted,
Frayest thy living feet along hell's pathways. 33
This one, upon whose prints thou seest me
pounding,
For all that now he naked goes and hairless,
Was of a station greater than thou thinkest: 36
He was the grandson of the good Gualdrada;
His name was Guido Guerra, and in his
lifetime
He with his wit wrought much, and with his
sabre, 39

The other who by me the sand is grinding,
 Is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose remembrance
 I the upper world should have glad acceptance. 42
 And I, who on a cross with them am fastened,
 Was Jacob Rusticucci, and of surety
 My froward wife is, more than aught, my
 ruin." 45
 If from the fire I could have had a cover,
 I would have cast myself below among them,
 And think that my instructor would have
 borne it : 48
 But, since I should have baked myself and
 scalded,
 Fear overcame in me the kindly impulse
 That made me even greedy to embrace
 them. 51
 Then I began : " Nay, not disdain but sorrow
 This your condition fixed so deep within me
 That slowly is it all obliterated, 54
 As soon as this my lord to me had spoken
 Words from purport whereof I thought
 within me
 That such a sort of folk as ye were coming. 57
 Of your own land am I, and ever and always
 The honoured names of you, and your
 achievements,
 Have pictured with affection, and have
 hearkened. 60

- I leave the gall, and for sweet fruits am going,
Promised to me by this my trusty leader :
But first I needs must drop unto the centre." 63
- "So may thy soul for length of days conductor
Be to thy limbs," he thereupon made answer,
"And so may thy renown shine bright behind
thee ; 66
- Tell us if courtesy and valour sojourn
In such wise as is wont within our city,
Or if therefrom it is departed wholly : 69
- For Guglielmo Borsiere, who among us
Mourns lately, and goes yonder with our
comrades,
Doth with his words give us no small
affliction." 72
- "The new-come folk, and sudden gains of com-
merce,
Pride and excess in such sort have begotten,
Florence ! in thee, already thou bemoan'st it :"
75
- Thus made I outcry, with my face uplifted.
The three, who understood that for an
answer,
Gazed each, as at sad truth, upon each other. 78
- "If otherwhiles it costeth thee so little
To satisfy another," they all answered,
"Happy art thou to speak thus at thy pleasure. 81
- Wherefore, so may'st thou quit these gloomy
regions,

And go to see again the glorious heavens,
 When to say 'I was there' it shall delight
 thee, 84
 See that thou speak of us unto the people."
 With that they broke the wheel, and, to
 accomplish
 Their flight, their nimble legs seemed to be
 pinions. 87
 An Amen could not have been said so quickly
 As they out of our sight had sudden vanished.
 So to the master to depart seemed fitting. 90
 I followed him, and but short space we traversed
 When came the sound so near us of the water
 We had been scarcely heard for all our
 speaking. 93
 Just as that river, which hath proper channel
 At first from Monte Veso to the eastward,
 On the left slope of Apennine descending, 96
 And which above hath name of Acquacheta
 Ere down into the lower bed it plunges,
 And then at Forli of that name is lacking, 99
 Booms yonder o'er St. Benedict of the upland,
 To fall thence in a single leap descending,
 Where should have been provision for a
 thousand ; 102
 In such wise, down below a shattered margin,
 We found that dark-hued water so resounding
 That in short space of time the ear had suffered. 105

I had a cord begirded round about me,
And therewithal I sometime had been minded
To catch the panther with the skin depicted. 108
When I had altogether loosed it from me,
According as my leader had commanded,
I held it out to him, coiled up and knotted : 111
Whereat towards the right-hand side he turned
him,
And, at some little distance from the border,
He cast it down into that chasm tremendous. 114
“ And surely some new thing must needs make
answer,”
I said within myself, “ to the new signal
That with his eyes the Master thus doth
second.” 117
Ah me ! how cautious men should be regarding
Those who not only see the outward doings,
But with their wit the thoughts within
examine. 120
He said to me : “ Soon there will come up
hither
That which I wait ; and what thy thought is
dreaming
'Tis fit should soon be to thy sight dis-
covered.” 123
Ever on truth which hath the face of falsehood
Should man shut lip as much as he is able ;
Since it engenders shame, though he be faultless ; 126

But here I cannot hold my peace, and, reader,
I swear you by the strains of this my drama—
So may they not be lacking in long favour— 129
That through that atmosphere obscure and heavy
I saw a shape approach us, swimming upward,
A marvellous thing to any heart undaunted ; 132
As cometh up a man who goes down, haply,
To loose an anchor that a rock hath grappled,
Or other thing that in the sea is hidden, 135
Who is spread above and drawn below together.

CANTO XVII

“ BEHOLD the monster with the tail sharp-pointed,
That passes hills and breaks through arms
and ramparts :
Behold the thing that makes the whole world
sicken : ” 3

Thus did begin to speak to me my leader ;
Then signed to it to come unto the margin,
Near by the limit of the trodden marbles. 6

And nearer came along that loathly image
Of fraud, and to the brink brought head and
body ;

But up' upon the bank its tail it drew not. 9

The features of a just man were its features :
It had the outward semblance so benignant :
And all the other bulk was of a serpent. 12

Two claws it had, with hair up to the armpits.
On back and breast and both the sides devices
Of knots it had depicted, and small bucklers. 15

Not with more colours, laid and interwoven,
Did ever make a cloth or Turks or Tartars,
Nor by Arachnè were such webs embroidered. 18

As every day upon the shore lie barges,
That are in part on land and part in water ;

And as among the gluttonous Germans yonder 21
 The beaver sets itself to wage its battle ;
 In such wise was that evillest monster lying
 Upon the edge of stone that locks the sand-
 plain. 24
 Within the void all of its tail was wriggling,
 Crooking above its back the fork envenomed
 That armed the point thereof in scorpion
 fashion. 27
 My leader said : " Our way must be diverted
 Now for a little space as far as yonder
 Perfidious beast, that there its rest is taking." 30
 So to the right-hand mamelon we descended,
 And on the extreme edge we took ten paces,
 Of sand and flickering flames to make clear
 riddance. 33
 And, when we are come up to it, I notice,
 Upon the sand, a little further onward,
 Folk sitting near the part where drops the
 surface. 36
 Thereat the master said to me : " In order
 That full experience of this Round, and
 ample,
 May'st carry, go and see thou their demeanour : 39
 But very brief be there thy conversation.
 Ere thou return, I with this beast will parley
 That it may grant to us its mighty shoulders." 42
 So once again along the extremest heading

Of that seventh circle I, all solitary,
Went on to where the mournful folk were
sitting. 45

Their dolour through their eyes was welling outward :
This side and that they with their hands
sought succour,
Now 'gainst the scalding soil, now 'gainst the
vapours. 48

Not otherwise do dogs in time of summer,
Now with the muzzle, now with paw, whenever
By fleas, or flies, or gadflies they are bitten. 51

When I had set my eyes upon the visage
Of some on whom the dolorous fire was falling,
Not one of them I knew ; but I distinguished 54
That from the neck of each there hung a wallet,
Which had a certain sign and certain colour ;
And thereupon it seemed their eye was feeding. 57

And as I came among them, closely looking,
I saw upon a yellow purse in azure
What of a lion had the face and semblance. 60

Then, as the course of my regard proceeded,
I saw another one like blood for redness,
Showing a goose that was more white than
butter, 63

And one, who of a sow, azure and pregnant,
Had the device displayed on his white satchel,
Said to me : " In this ditch what art thou
doing ? 66

Now go thy way ; and, since thou still art living,
 Know that Vitaliano, my old neighbour,
 Here soon upon my left flank shall be sitting : 69
 I am from Padua, and these all from Florence :
 Many a time and oft my ears they deafen,
 Crying out : ' Let him come, the knight sur-
 passing, 72
 He who will bring the wallet with three he-
 goats.' ”
 Here he his mouth distorted, and drew outward
 His tongue, as doth an ox that licks his
 nostrils. 75
 And I, fearing that longer stay might anger
 Him who had given me warning not to loiter,
 Turned back and left the weary souls behind
 me. 78
 I found my leader, who had climbed already
 Upon the crupper of the fearsome creature,
 And said to me : “ Be strong now and cour-
 ageous : 81
 Now the descent is made by such-like ladder :
 Mount thou in front, for I will take the
 middle,
 So that the tail be powerless for mischief.” 84
 As is a man who hath so near the shiver
 Of quartan ague that his nails are livid,
 And at mere sight of shade he quakes all over, 87
 Just such became I at the words that reached me.

But his rebukes wrought shame in me, which
ever
Before a good lord's eyes makes valiant ser-
vant. 90

I set myself upon those ugly shoulders ;
Truly I would have said :—but voice there
came not
As I intended—" See thou close embrace me." 93

But he, who other times had been my succour
In other hardness, soon as I had mounted,
Did with his arms enfold me and sustain me, 96
And said : " Now, Geryon, 'tis time, bestir thee ;
Large be the wheels, and the descent be gentle ;
Think of the novel burden that thou bearest." 99

As from its berth puts out a little vessel,
Backing and backing, so he thence moved
outward,
And, when he felt himself at play completely, 102
There, where his breast had been, his tail
directed,
And stretched it like an eel, and set it moving,
And with his claws he drew the air towards
him. 105

I think not any greater was the terror
When Phaëthon the chariot reins abandoned
Whereby the sky, as still appears, was roasted ; 108
Nor when by reason of the wax o'erheated
Poor Icarus was ware his loins were moulting,

His father crying to him: "Wrong road thou
 takest," 111
 Than mine was when I saw that I was wholly
 In air on every side, and saw extinguished
 Sight of all things, excepting of the monster. 114
 It goes its way, swimming on, gently, gently ;
 Wheels, and descends, but I do not perceive it,
 Save that a light air fans my face from under. 117
 I heard already on the right the whirlpool
 Making a dreadful roaring down beneath us :
 Wherefore I stretched my head with eyes bent
 downward. 120
 Then at the precipice I was more fearful ;
 For fires I saw, and became ware of moanings,
 Whereat, a-quake, I crouched my limbs together. 123
 And then saw, for before I did not see it,
 The sweep and the descent, by the great horrors
 That near and nearer drew in divers quarters. 126
 As a ger-hawk, that long enough hath lingered
 On wing without or lure or bird perceiving,
 Making the falconer say, ' Ah, down already !' 129
 Descendeth weary whence he started nimble,
 Wheeling a hundred wheels, at last alighting
 Far from his master, sullen and disdainful ; 132
 In such wise at the bottom Geryon set us,
 At very foot of the great crag rough-quarried ;
 And, thereupon, our persons once unladen, 135
 He sped away, as from the string the arrow,

CANTO XVIII

A PLACE there is in hell called Malebolge :
All rock it is, and of the hue of iron,
As is the girdle circling round about it. 3
Right in the middle of the field malignant
There gapes a pit, of width and depth exceeding,
Whose ordering I in proper place will tell you. 6
The enclosure that is left is then a circle
Between the pit and solid cliff surrounding,
Its bottom all divided in ten Valleys. 9
Such figure as, when fosses in succession
For safeguard of the walls engirdle castles,
Is by the part that they are in afforded, 12
There in similitude those gulfs presented :
And, in such fortresses, as from their thresholds
Unto the outer bank there are small gangways, 15
So from the lowest of the crag ran forward
Rock-spurs that cut across the dikes and
fosses
Right to the pit which lops them off and joins
them. 18
In this same place, from Geryon's backbone
shaken,
We found ourselves ; and to the left the poet

Held on his course, and I moved on behind
him. 21

Upon the right hand I beheld new anguish,
Torments of a new fashion, and new scourgers,
Wherewith was filled quite full the outer Valley. 24

Down in the bottom naked were the sinners :
This side the midst they came with face
towards us,
On that went with us, but with greater paces ; 27

Just as the Romans for that mighty army,
The year of jubilee, contrived a method
To pass the folk across the bridge in order : 30

For on one side all have their brow directed
Towards the Castle, and go unto St. Peter ;
On the other edge they go towards the
mountain. 33

This side and that, over the gloomy pavement,
Horned demons I beheld, armed with great
lashes,
Who beat them from behind in cruel fashion. 36

Ah ! how they made them lift their shanks
already
At the first strokes ! By that time for the
second
Not any one, nor for the third, was waiting. 39

While I was faring on, my eyes confronted
One of them, and at once I said : " From seeing
That one before I have not fasted always." 42

Therefore, to know his face, my feet I planted ;
And my sweet leader halted there beside me,
And gave assent I should go somewhat
backward. 45

And that bescourged one thought to make concealment,
Lowering his face, but little it availed him ;
Because I said : " Thou with thine eye cast
earthward, 48

If that the features be not false thou bearest,
Thou art Venedico Caccianimico :
But what brings thee to such a stinging
Salsè ? " 51

And he to me : " With ill content I tell thee ;
But thy clear utterance doth overpower me,
Which makes me bring the old world to my
remembrance. 54

I was the one who led Ghisolabella
To do the evil bidding of the Marquis,
However may be noised the shocking story. 57

Nor weep I solitary from Bologna :
Indeed, so full of them is all this region
That not so many tongues are now instructed 60
Between Savena and Reno to say ' Sipa ' :
And, if of this thou would'st have faith or
witness,
Call thou to mind our avaricious temper." 63

While he was speaking thus, a demon smote him

- Hard with his thong, and said : " Begone,
thou pandar :
There are no women hereabout for coining." 66
I ranged myself again beside my escort :
Thereafter we arrivèd in a few paces
Where from the bank a rock-spur was pro-
jecting : 69
Quite lightsofely upon it we ascended,
And, turning to the right along its ridges,
From those eternal circles made departure. 72
When we were at the point at which it opens
Below, to give to the belashed a passage,
My leader said : " Hold fast : and of these
others 75
Ill-fated, let the visage strike upon thee,
Of whom as yet thou didst not see the
features,
By reason that with us they fared together." 78
From the old bridge we gazed on the procession
Which toward us on the other side was coming,
And which the lash was driving in like manner. 81
Without demand of mine, my gentle master
Said to me : " Watch that great one who is
coming,
And seems not to shed tears for all the dolour : 84
How kingly still doth he remain in aspect !
That one is Jason, who by wit and valour
Deprived of their great ram the men of Colchis. 87

He on his way passed through the isle of Lemnos,
 What time the daring women, spurning pity,
 Had given unto death all their male kindred. 90
 There with love-tokens and with ornate language
 Did he beguile Hypsipylè, the damsel
 Who had before beguiled the other women. 93
 He left her there, with child and solitary :
 Such fault to such sore torment doth con-
 demn him :
 And vengeance is done also for Medea : 96
 With him goes whoso doth beguile in such wise.
 And this may be enough of the first valley
 To know, and those whom in its teeth it
 clutches." 99
 Already were we where the narrow pathway
 Makes with the second dike a junction cross-
 wise,
 And makes the shoulders for another archway. 102
 Thence we were ware of folk in the next Valley
 Who moan with pain, and snuffle with their
 muzzles,
 And smite with their own palms upon their
 bodies. 105
 The bank-sides were with noisome mould in-
 crusted
 By the breath from down below that clots
 upon them,
 Which made a battle with the eyes and nostrils. 108

The bottom is so deep no place suffices
 To see, except by mounting on the saddle
 O' the arch where that the rock-spur hangs most
 forward. 111

Thither we came, and thence, i' the ditch below
 us,
 I saw a folk immersed in one vast cesspit,
 That seemed to have been filled from human
 privies. 114

And, while I with my eye down there was search-
 ing,
 I saw one with his head so foul with ordure
 That whether he were lay or clerk appeared
 not. 117

He cried aloud to me : " Why art so greedy
 To gaze on me more than the other filthy ?"
 And I to him : " Why, if I well remember, 120
 I saw thee once before with hair unwetted :
 Thou art Alessio Interminai of Lucca :
 Therefore I eye thee more than all the
 others." 123

And he at that, beating upon his noddle :
 " Down here below my flatteries have drowned
 me,
 Whereof I never found my tongue had sur-
 feit." 126

Just after that my leader said : " Contrive now
 To stretch thy face a little further forward,

That with thine eyes thou well may'st reach
the features 129

Of yonder loathsome and dishevelled baggage,
Who there with ordurous nails herself is
scratching,

Now crouching, now upon her feet uprisen. 132
She is the harlot Thaïs, she who answered

Her paramour, when he asked her : ' Have I
many

Thanks as regarding thee ? ' ' Nay, thanks
astounding.' 135

And let our sight herewith be satiated."

CANTO XIX

O SIMON MAGUS ! O forlorn disciples !
Ye, who the things of God, that ought of
goodness
To be the spouses, make, by your extortion, 3
Adulterous for sake of gold and silver ;
For you in turn must now resound the trumpet,
Seeing that ye are set in the third Valley. 6
We had already to the tomb succeeding
Mounted upon the rock-spur, on that portion
That plumbs the pit exactly o'er the middle. 9
Wisdom supreme, how vast the art thou showest,
In heaven, in earth, and in the world of evil ;
And what just measure doth thy power dis-
tribute ! 12
I saw along the sides, and on the bottom,
The livid rock quite full of orifices,
Of one width all, and every one a circle. 15
They not less ample seemed to me nor greater
Than those that in my own fair San Giovanni
Are made for standing-place of the baptizers : 18
One of which same, not many years yet bygone,
I broke for one who therewithin was drowning ;
This shall be seal for all men's undeceiving. 21

Forth from the mouth of every one projected
A sinner's feet, and of his legs a portion
Up to the calf : inside was the remainder. 24
The soles of all of them were both enkindled ;
Whereat so mightily the joints were writhing
That they had snapped asunder bands and
withies. 27
Like as the blaze is wont upon things oily
Only along the outer rind to travel,
So was it there, from heels unto the toe-tips. 30
" Who is that one, dear master, who is angered,
Writhing more than the others his companions,"
I said, " and whom a redder flame is
sucking ? " 33
And he to me : " If thou wilt have me bear thee
Below there by yon bank which is more sloping,
From him shalt know of him, and his wrong
doings." 36
And I : " 'Tis fair to me as to thee pleasing :
Thou art my lord, and know'st that I depart
not
From what thou will'st, and know'st what is
unspoken." 39
On to the top of the fourth dike then came we :
We turned, and to the left hand we descended
Down in the bottom, orificed and narrow. 42
And my good master still did from his haunches

Not set me down till to the hole he fetched me
 Of him who with his shanks was so lamenting. 45
 "Whoe'er thou art, who keep'st thy top part under,
 Pitiful soul, just like a stake fast driven,"
 Gan I to say, "pray speak if thou art able." 48
 I stood as stands a friar that confesses
 The treacherous assassin, who recalls him
 When he is fixed, whereby death stays a little. 51
 And he cried out: "Art upright there already,
 Boniface? art thou there already upright?
 By several years then is the scroll a liar. 54
 So soon art satiated of that having,
 For which thou did'st not fear to take the lady
 So fair by guile, and afterward to outrage?" 57
 Such I became as those are whose demeanour,
 From understanding not the answer given
 them,
 Is as if mocked, nor know they how to answer. 60
 Then straightway Virgil said: "Say to him
 quickly,
 'I am not the one, I am not the one, thou
 thinkest.'" 63
 And I made answer as was laid upon me:
 Whereat the spirit writhed in every muscle
 His feet: then, sighing, and with voice of weeping,
 He said to me: "Then what of me art
 asking? 66
 If to know who I am so much concerns thee

That thou hast therefore passed adown the
 bankside,
Know thou that I was clothed with the great
 mantle, 69
And was of very truth son of the She-bear ;
 So covetous, for advancement of the bearcubs,
 That wealth above, and here myself, I
 hoarded. 72
Beneath my head are drawn away the others
 Who were in simony my predecessors,
 Deep in the fissures of the rock imbedded. 75
I, likewise, shall drop down below, whenever
 Shall come that other one for whom I took
 thee,
 Then when I asked of thee the sudden ques-
 tion. 78
But longer is the time my feet I have roasted
 Already, and have thus been topsy-turvy,
 Than he with red-hot feet will stay implanted : 81
For after him shall come, of fouler doings,
 From towards the setting sun a lawless pastor,
 Such as is fit both him and me to cover. 84
New Jason shall he be, of whom is written
 In Maccabees : and, as to one was gentle
 His king, so shall to him be France's ruler." 87
I know not if I was not here too heedless ;
 For even in this strain I made him answer :
 " Tell me, oh ! tell me, now, how great a treasure 90

- Wanted our Lord beforehand from St. Peter,
 Ere that he put the keys into his keeping ?
 Certain, save 'Follow me,' he asked for
 nothing. 93
- Nor Peter nor the rest asked of Matthias
 Silver or gold when he by lot was chosen
 In the place whereof the guilty soul made
 forfeit. 96
- Therefore keep still, for thou art rightly punished ;
 And keep good guard of the ill-gotten money
 That against Charles made thee become so
 zealous. 99
- And, were it not that even now forbids me
 The reverence due unto the keys exalted,
 Whereof thou wast in the glad life the holder, 102
 I would make use of words even more weighty :
 For this your avarice the world doth sadden,
 Trampling the good and raising up the wicked. 105
 You the Evangelist discerned, you pastors,
 When she who hath her seat upon the waters
 Was seen of him with kings committing
 whoredom ; 108
- She who with sevenfold heads came into being,
 And had the tenfold horn for demonstration,
 While virtue in her bridegroom's eyes found
 favour. 111
- A god ye have made yourselves of gold and
 silver,

And from idolaters what else divides you,
Save that they pray to one and you a
hundred ? 114

Ah ! Constantine, of how great ill was mother,
Not thy conversion, but that fatal dowry,
Which from thy hands received the first rich
Father." 117

And while to him such notes as these I chanted,
Whether 'twas wrath or conscience' prick that
stung him,
With both his soles he mightily was kicking. 120

I am sure that to my guide it was well-pleasing :
With so content a countenance he hearkened,
All through, the sound o' the words of truth
explicit. 123

And thereupon with both his arms he took me,
And, when all up beside his breast he had me,
He climbed back by the way where he des-
cended : 126

Nor wearied he to have me strained against him,
Till to the summit of the arch he bore me
That from the fourth to the fifth dike is foot-
path : 129

And softly there did he lay down the burden,
Softly because o' the steep and ugly rock-spur,
That would to she-goats be a toilsome passage. 132

Thence was another vale to me discovered.

CANTO XX

OF novel pain behoves me to make verses,
And give the matter to this canto twenty
Of the first poem, which is of the sunken. 3
By this I was disposed with all my powers
For gazing into the discovered bottom,
Which was with tears of bitter anguish
watered ; 6
And saw folk coming through the great round
valley,
In silence and in tears, the same step keeping
As in this world keep litany processions. 9
As lower down on them my sight descended,
In marvellous fashion each of them seemed
twisted
Between the chin and where the chest com-
mences. 12
For round towards the loins was turned the
visage,
And need was laid on them of coming back-
ward,
Because to see in front had been denied them. 15
Perchance ere now by reason of a palsy
Some one hath thus been utterly contorted ;

But neither saw I it, nor do believe it. 1
 So God permit thee, reader, fruit to gather
 Of this thy reading, for thyself a moment
 Consider how I could keep dry my eyelids, 21
 When I beheld near by me our own image
 Distorted so that from the eyes the weeping
 Watered the buttocks down along the fissure. 24
 Certain, I wept, supported on a corner
 Of the hard spur, so freely that my escort
 Said to me : "Art thou still among the simple ? 27
 Here piety lives when wholly dead is pity.
 Who is than he more desperately wicked
 Who to the doom divine doth bring com-
 passion ? 30
 Raise, raise, thy head, and see him for whom
 opened
 The earth her jaws in sight of all the Thebans :
 Whereat they cried aloud : ' Whither art
 rushing, 33
 Amphiaraüs, why dost leave the battle ? '
 And in his headlong downward rush he stayed
 not
 Till he reached Minos, who holds fast all comers. 36
 Observe, he hath a breast made of his shoulders :
 Because he fain would see too far before him,
 He looketh back, and maketh backward
 journey. 39
 Tiresias see too, who changed his semblance,

What time he from a male became a female,
Changing his members, one and all, for others : 42
And then the need was laid on him of beating
Down with his wand the two entwisted serpents,
Ere he could have again his manly feathers. 45
Aruns is he who backs against his belly ;
He who in Luni's hills (where pulls the thistles
The Carrarese, who lower hath his dwelling,) 48
Amongst the glittering marbles had the cavern
For his abode ; from whence to watch the
heavens,
And watch the sea, not shortened was his
prospect. 51
And yonder one who covers up her bosom,
Which thou dost see not, with unloosened
tresses,
And on the other side hath skin all hairy, 54
Was Manto, who made search through many
countries :
And afterwards where I was born she tarried :
Wherefore I will thou hearken me a little. 57
After her father from this life departed,
And into bondage came the town of Bacchus,
She for a great while through the world went
faring. 60
Above, in Italy's fair land, a basin
Lies 'neath the alp that locks the German
confine

Over Tyrol, which hath for name Benacus. 63
Through thousand springs, I think, and more,
the Pennine
Is washed 'twixt Val Camonica and Garda,
By water that in that same basin stagnates. 66
I' the midst a place is where the Brescian Pastor,
And he of Trent, and he too of Verona,
Might make the sign, if he should take that
journey. 69
Peschiera lies, a fair and mighty bulwark,
Fit for confronting Bergamese and Brescians,
Where the surrounding bank hath settled
lower. 72
There, one and all, must tumble down whatever
Cannot remain embosomed in Benacus,
And make a river down through verdant
pastures. 75
Soon as the water makes a head for running,
'Tis called the Mincio, and no more Benacus,
To where it falls in Po down by Governo : 78
Not far its course before it finds a level,
Wherein it spreads, and makes thereof a
marsh,
And often in the summer time is sickly. 81
There, on her passage, did the savage maiden
Espy in midst of the morass a region
Uncultivated and devoid of dwellers. 84
There, that she might escape all human consort,

She halted with her train, to ply her magic,
 And lived, and there she left her empty body. 87
 The men thereafter who around were scattered
 Betook them to that place, which was a
 stronghold
 From the morass it had on every quarter, 90
 And over those dead bones they made a city,
 And for her sake who first the place had chosen
 Mantua, without more augury, they called it. 93
 Aforetime were its folk within more crowded,
 Before the foolishness of Casalodi
 Was led into a trap by Pinamonte. 96
 Therefore I warn thee, that, if e'er thou hearest
 My land had origin in other fashion,
 The truth may by no falsehood be defrauded." 99
 And I : " To me, dear master, thy discourses
 So certain are, and hold so fast my credence,
 That others would to me be but spent embers. 102
 But tell me of the folk that make procession,
 If any thou dost see of them noteworthy,
 For upon that alone my mind is working." 105
 Then he to me said : " He who from his cheek-
 bone
 Puts forth his beard above his swarthy
 shoulders
 Was, at the time when Greece of males was
 empty, 108
 So that remained scarce any for the cradles,

An augur, and with Calchas gave the moment
To cut at Aulis the first mooring cable. 111
Eurypylyus his name, and so doth sing him
My lofty tragedy in such a passage :
Thou know'st it well, who know'st it all
completely 114
That other, who is in the flanks so slender,
Was Michael Scotus, who in very surety
Knew well the game of all the frauds of magic. 117
Guido Bonatti see, and see Asdente,
Who now would fain upon his thread and
leather
Have set his mind ; but late is his repentance. 120
See there the unfortunates who left the needle,
The spindle and the distaff, and turned
witches :
With herbs and images their spells they
practised. 123
But come now, for already on the limit
Of either hemisphere, and under Seville
Touching the wave, stands Cain with bunch of
briar ; 126
And yesternight the moon was round already.
Well mayest thou recall it, for it did thee
No harm from time to time in the deep forest." 129
Thus he discoursed, and we the while went
onward.

CANTO XXI

Thus, on from bridge to other bridge, discoursing
Of things my comedy cares not to sing of,
We came, and were by now the summit holding, 3
When we made halt to see another fissure
Of Malebolge, and more idle moanings.
And I beheld it marvellously darksome. 6
As in the arsenal of the Venetians
Boils the tenacious pitch in time of winter,
For tarring of their barks unsound and leaky, 9
That cannot sail—and, for a task alternate,
One doth renew his bark, one caulks the
broad-sides
Of his which hath completed many a voyage ; 12
One at the prow, one at the stern doth hammer ;
Others make oars, and others twist the
cordage ;
One puts new canvas in the main or foresail— 15
So, not by fire but by divine contrivance,
There boiled below a mass of dense bitumen,
That smeared the bank with slime on every
quarter. 18
I saw it, but I did not see within it
More than the bubbles that the boiling lifted ;

Saw them swell up, and sink again, collapsing. 21
While I was gazing there below intently,
“ Take heed, take heed,” my leader said, and
drew me
Unto him from the place where I was
standing. 24
Then I turned round, as one who is impatient
To see a thing wherefrom he should be fleeing,
And whom a sudden fear deprives of courage, 27
Who, for the sight, delays not his departure ;
And I espied behind us a black devil
Coming along upon the rock-spur, running. 30
Ah me ! how fearsome was he in his aspect,
How pitiless he seemed in his demeanour,
With open wings, and on his feet how nimble ! 33
Upon his shoulder, which was sharp and
haughty,
A sinner made a load with both his haunches,
And of the feet he held fast gripped the
tendons. 36
“ O Evil-Claws,” he said from off our causeway,
“ Here is one of the ancients of St. Zita :
Put him beneath, for I am again returning 39
To that same land I have well furnished with
them.
A jobber is each one, except Bonturo :
‘ Nay ’ there becometh ‘ Yea ’ for sake of
money.” 42

He flung him down below, his steps retracing
 Along the solid spur, and never mastiff
 Let slip was at such speed to chase a robber. 45
 The other plunged, and rose again bent double.
 But they, the fiends who had the bridge for
 cover,
 Cried out: "The holy face hath here no
 station: 48
 Here other swimming is than in the Serchio:
 Therefore, if hast no liking for our scratches,
 Do not above the pitch make thy appearance." 51
 With more than hundred grapnels then they
 nipped him:
 They said: "Thou here must make thy dance
 in cover,
 So that, if canst, thou make a catch in
 secret." 54
 Not otherwise do cooks oblige their scullions
 To plunge down in the middle of the cauldron
 The meat with hooks, that it may not come
 floating. 57
 The gentle master said to me: "In order
 That it appear not thou art here, squat lowly
 Behind a ridge, so as to have some shelter. 60
 And as to any harm that may be done me,
 Fear thou not, for these things I count
 familiar;
 For I was once before at such a contest." 63

And then he passed on thence towards the
bridge-head :

And, as he came above the sixth embankment,
Much need was his to have a brow un-
daunted. 66

With just such fury, and with just such tempest,
As dogs go forth at heels of a poor beggar,
Who suddenly asks alms where he has halted, 69
They issued from beneath upon the gangway,
And turned against him all their grappling
irons.

But he cried out : " Let none of you be
wicked ! 72

Before that hook of yours lays hold upon me,
Let one of you step forth to give me audience,
And then of grappling me be counsel taken." 75

" Go, Evil-tail : " they cried aloud together :
Whereat one started,—while stood still the
others—

And came unto him, saying : " What avails it ? " 78
" Thinkest thou, Evil-tail, that thou dost see me
As one who has come hither," said my
master,

" Against all your defence thus far in safety, 81
Without the will divine and fate propitious ?
Let us go on, for it is willed in heaven
That I should show another this wild
journey." 84

At that his arrogance became so fallen
That to his feet he let his hook fall idle,
And said to the rest : " Let him not now be
smitten." 87

My leader then to me : " Ho ! thou who sittest
Asquat among the ridges of the causeway,
Now mayest thou come back to me securely." 90

Whereat I rose, and quickly came towards him ;
And all the devils made a motion forward,
So that I feared they would not keep the
bargain. 93

And once in just such fear I saw the soldiers
Who under pact of safety left Caprona,
Seeing themselves in midst of foes so many. 96

Closely I ranged myself, with all my body,
Beside my leader, nor my eyes diverted
From the aspèct of them, which was not
kindly. 99

They lowered their forks, and : " Wilt thou
that I touch him,"
One to another said, " upon the crupper ? "
And they made answer : " Ay, make sure
to nick him." 102

But the first demon, who discourse was holding
With my conductor, turned round very
quickly,
And said : " Steady now, steady, Tangle-
maker : " 105

Then said to us : " Along this spur no further
Is any means of going, for all shattered
The sixth arch lies right down unto the bottom. 108
And if 'tis still your pleasure to go forward,
Then go your way along by this embank-
ment :
Another spur is nigh, that makes a pathway. 111
Yesterday, five hours later than this moment,
A thousand and ten score, with six and sixty,
Made up of years, since here the way was
broken. 114
I am sending thither some of these my people
To watch if any one should take an airing :
Go you with them, for they will not be guilty. 117
Bring thyself forward, Droop-wing, and thou,
Tread-frost,"
Then he began to say, " and thou too, Dog-
nose,
And of the half score Frizzle-beard be leader. 120
Let Dragon-snout moreover come, and Joker,
Dodger with the buck-teeth, and Scratch-the-
puppy ;
And Colts-foot come, and Blazing-face the
raging : 123
Make search around the boiling pot of birdlime :
See these be safe as far as the next rock-ledge,
That goes above the lairs wholly unbroken." 126
" Ah me ! " I said, " what is it I see, dear master ?

Ah ! let us go alone without an escort,
If know'st the way : for me, I do not ask it. 129
If thou hast ta'en such notice as art wonted,
Dost thou not see that with their teeth they
are gnashing,
And with their eyebrows threaten us some
mischief ?" 132
And he to me : " I will not have thee fearful :
Let them gnash on, just as their fancy takes
them :
'Tis for the doleful sodden ones they do it." 135
They made a wheel along the dike to leftward ;
But each of them had first towards their leader
Shot out his tongue between his teeth for
signal ; 138
And he had made a trumpet of his bowel.

CANTO XXII

I HAVE seen horsemen breaking camp aforetime,
And starting on a charge, or else parading,
And sometimes for security retreating; 3
I have seen flying squadrons through your
country,
O Aretines, and foray parties marching,
The shock of tournaments, and rush of
joustings, 6
Anon with sound of bells, anon of trumpets,
With sound of drum-beat, and with castle-
signals,
With things of our own country and with
foreign; 9
But never with so singular a bugle
Have I seen horsemen moving, no, nor foot-
men,
Nor ship to sign of land or star responding. 12
We went along with the half-score of demons—
Ah! fearsome company; but 'in the chapel
With saintly men, and in the inn with
gluttons!' 15
Entirely to the pitch I gave attention,
To notice every aspect of the Valley,

And of the folk who therewithin were scalded. 18
 As dolphins do, what time they make a signal
 To mariners with the arching of their back-
 bone,
 To stand by for the safety of their vessel, 21
 So, ever and anon, the pain to lighten,
 His back showed one or other of the sinners,
 And hid it in less time than lightning flashes. 24
 And as frogs stay upon the edge of water
 Within a ditch, with only muzzle showing,
 So that the feet and other bulk they cover, 27
 So were the sinners staying in every quarter ;
 But, as towards them Frizzle-beard came nearer,
 So they withdrew themselves beneath the
 boilings. 30
 I saw—and at it still my heart doth shudder—
 One lingering, in such wise as it happens
 That one frog stays behind and dives another. 33
 And Scratch-the-puppy, who was more abreast
 him,
 Caught with his grappling-iron his pitch-
 soaked tresses,
 And drew him up, who seemed to me an otter. 36
 Of one and all I knew the name already ;
 So had I noted them when they were chosen,
 And after, when they named each other,
 listened. 39
 “ Now, Blazing-face, see to it that thou fasten

Thy talons into him so as to flay him,"
Cried out together all the gang accursèd. 42
And I : " Dear master, pray, if thou art able,
Contrive to know who is the wretch mis-
fortuned
Come to the hands of these his adversaries." 45
At that my guide went over close beside him ;
Asked him from whence he was ; and he made
answer :
" Of the kingdom of Navarre I was a native ; 48
My mother put me servant to a noble ;
For she had borne me by a good-for-nothing,
A waster of himself and of his substance. 51
Then entered I the good king Thibault's service :
And there I set myself to play the jobber ;
Whereof account I render in this scalding." 54
And Dodger, he from out whose mouth there
issued,
As from a boar's, a tusk in every quarter,
Made him aware how one of them could rip
him. 57
In midst of evil cats the mouse had fallen.
But Frizzle-beard made with his arms a barrier,
And said : " Stay over there till I enfork him !" 60
And turned his countenance towards my master :
" Ask him," he said, " again, if thou desirest
To know more from him, ere the rest undo
him." 63

My leader then : " Pray tell ; of the other
 culprits
 Knowest thou anyone who is a Latin
 Beneath the pitch ? " And he : " I have
 departed 66

But now from one who was thereby a neighbour.
 So would I still were with him under cover !
 For I should not be fearing hook nor talon." 69

And Joker said : " Enough and more we have
 suffered ; "
 And caught his arm so with his grappling-
 iron,
 He tore away a strip of it completely. 72

Dragon-snout too showed eagerness to grip him
 Down on the legs ; whereat their file-
 commander
 Turned himself round about with evil aspect. 75

When they were pacified again a little,
 Without delay my leader thus demanded
 Of him, who still upon his wound was gazing : 78

" Who was the one from whom an ill departure
 Thou sayest thou didst make, for coming
 shoreward ? "
 And he made answer : " He was Fra Gomita, 81
 He of Gallura, of all fraud a vessel ;
 Who his lord's enemies in hand had gotten,
 And dealt so with them each was well
 contented. 84

Money he took, and let them go in quiet :
 He says himself : and in his other functions
 He was a jobber too, not small, but sovran : 87
 With him frequenteth the Lord Michael Zanche
 Of Logodoro, nor in their discoursing
 About Sardinia do their tongues feel weary. 90
 Ah me ! look at the other one there gnashing.
 I would speak further, but I fear me that one
 Is making ready now to scratch my scurvy." 93
 And the Grand Provost, turning round to
 Coltsfoot,
 Who, to make better stroke, his eyes was
 rolling,
 Said : " Get thyself away, thou bird per-
 fidious." 96
 " If ye desire to have or sight or hearing,"
 Began again the terror-stricken straightway,
 " Of Tuscans or of Lombards, I will fetch them : 99
 But let the evil claws be in retirement
 A little, that they may not fear their
 vengeance.
 And I, while I in this same place am sitting, 102
 For one I am, will bring another seven,
 When I shall whistle, as it is our custom
 To do when any comes above the surface." 105
 Dog-nose at such-like words threw up his muzzle,
 Shaking his head, and said : " Hark to the
 cunning

He thought of to get chance to cast him
 downward." 108
 Whereat he, who had store in great abundance
 Of snares, replied : " I am too cunning truly,
 When for my own I get increase of sorrow." 111
 Droop-wing could not refrain, and going counter
 To the others said to him : " If thou go under,
 I will not come behind thee at a gallop, 114
 But up above the pitch will flap my pinions.
 Leave we the summit, and the bank be
 buckler,
 To see if thou alone canst overreach us." 117
 Now, reader, thou shalt hear a sport quite novel.
 Each to the other side his eyes diverted,
 He first who 'gainst so doing had been sourest. 120
 He of Navarre chose well his time, and planted
 His soles firm on the ground, and in a moment
 Leapt, and unloosed himself from their set
 purpose ; 123
 Whereat each one felt for the fault compunction,
 He most, who was occasion of the failure.
 So started he, and cried aloud : " Thou art
 taken." 126
 But little it availed him, for the pinions
 Could not outstrip the fright ; the one went
 under :
 And, flying up, his breast the other
 straightened. 129

Not otherwise the wild duck, in an instant,
 When near the falcon draweth, downward
 plunges ;
 And it returns on high, in wrath and baffled. 132
Tread-frost at that, indignant to be cheated,
 Flying behind, laid hold of him, delighted
 That the other should escape, to have the
 quarrel : 135
And, as the jobber made his disappearance,
 He turned his talons in upon his comrade,
 And came above the ditch with him in grapple. 138
But in good sooth for clawing him the other
 Was a wild sparrow-hawk, and both together
 In the middle of the boiling pool they tumbled. 141
The heat was a disgrappler very sudden ;
 And yet there was no sign of their uprising ;
 In such wise were their pinions slimed together. 144
Frizzle-beard with the rest of his, lamenting,
 To the other side bid four of them fly over
 With all their grapnels ; and they, very
 quickly, 147
This way and that, unto their posts departed :
 They held their hooks out towards the
 entangled wretches,
 Who were well cooked within the crust
 already : 150
And so we left them, in such sort embarrassed.

CANTO XXIII

SILENT, and lonely, and without attendance,
We went our way, one first, the other after.
As minor friars go along a pathway. 3
My thought had been diverted to the fable
Of Æsop, as I watched the present quarrel,
Where of the frog he spake and of the field-
mouse : 6
For "Ay" and "Yes" have not more close
resemblance
Than one has with the other, if beginning
And end with steady mind are well accoupled. 9
And, even as one thought bursteth from another,
So was another straightway born of that one,
Which made the primal fear within me double. 12
I thought on this wise : These, on our occasion,
Have been befooled with damage and with
flouting
Of such sort that I quite believe it frets them. 15
If wrath is woven on top of evil purpose,
They will be coming after us, more cruel
Than is the hound to the poor hare it seizes. 18
I felt my hair all standing up already
With fear, and I was all attent to rearward,

That closes up one side of the next Valley. 45
Never did water run through sluice so quickly
To put an overshot mill-wheel in motion,
When it approaches nearest to the paddles, 48
As did my master slip adown that selvage,
Bearing me thence along upon his bosom,
As I had been his son, not a companion. 51
Hardly his feet had yet attained the bottom
O' the depth below, when they were on the
summit
Above us; but no thought was there of
danger : 54
For Providence exalted, which was minded
As ministers of the fifth ditch to set them,
Withholds from all the power of thence
departing. 57
Down there we found a folk of painted visage,
That went around with steps exceeding
sluggish,
Weeping, and in their looks subdued and
weary. 60
Gowns they were wearing, with low hoods upon
them
Drooping before their eyes, made in such
fashion
As in Cologne they make for the monastics. 63
Gilded they are outside, so that it dazzles,
But inwardly all lead, and are so heavy

That Frederic but of straw compelled the
wearing. 66

Oh ! mantle of fatigue for everlasting !
We turned our course again, still to the
leftward,
Along with them, intent on the sad weeping. 69

But, from the weight, that weary folk was coming
So very slowly on, that new companions
We had at every moving of the haunches. 72

Wherefore I to my guide : " Do thou find some-
one
Who may be known by name or by his doings,
And move thy eyes around, as we go forward." 75

And one, who understood the words of Tuscan,
Behind us cried aloud : " Steady your foot-
steps,
Ye who thus 'thwart the murky air are
speeding : 78

Haply shalt have from me that which thou
seekest."

Whereat my leader turned and said : " Await
him,
And then according to his pace go onward." 81

I halted, and saw two, in face displaying
Great eagerness of spirit to be with us ;
But the strait path delayed them, and the
burden. 84

When they came up, with eye somewhat aslanting,

Without a word they fixed their gaze upon
me :

Then to each other turned and spoke together : 87

“ This one appears alive by his throat’s action :
And, if they are dead, then by what dis-
pensation

Go they uncovered by the heavy garment ? ” 90

Then said to me : “ Oh ! Tuscan, who the college
Of the sad hypocrites art come to visit,
Have it not in disdain to say who art thou.” 93

And I to him : “ O’er the fair stream of Arno
I was both born and bred, in the great city ;
And I am with the body I had always. 96

But who are ye, in whom so great a sorrow
As that I see adown the cheeks doth trickle ?
And what the pain within you that thus
sparkles ? ’ 99

And one replied to me : “ The gowns of orange
Are leaden, and so thick that in this fashion
The weights do set the balances a-creaking. 102

We two were Joyous Friars, from Bologna :
I Catalan, and this one Loderingo,
By name, and chosen by thy land together, 105

As one sole man is usually taken,
To keep its peace : and we were such like
keepers

As still are seen around about Gardingo.” 108

Thus I began : “ Oh ! Brothers, these your evils,”—

But said no more ; for one my eyes confronted,
Crucified with three stakes upon the roadway. 111
When he beheld me, he gan writhe all over,
Puffing within his beard, with frequent
sighings.

And Catalan, who thereat apprehended, 114
“ Yon pierced one,” said to me, “ at whom thou
gazest,

Counselled the Pharisees that it was needful
To put one man to torment for the people. 117
Athwart the pathway is he set, and naked,
As thou dost see ; and he must, whosoever
Doth pass, first feel how much he weighs,
while passing. 120

And in like manner suffers his wife’s father
Within this ditch, and the others of the
council,

Which for the Hebrews was an evil sowing.” 123
Then did I see that Virgil marvelled greatly
At him who was as on a cross extended
So shamefully in the eternal exile. 126

Then to the friar he these words directed :
“ Be not displeased, if so you may, to tell us
If on the right hand lieth any gullet, 129

Whereby we may be able both to issue,
Without constraining some of the black angels
To come from yonder depth to aid our going.” 132

Then made he answer : “ Nearer than thou hopest

There lies a rock that from the greater girdle
 Moves out and crosses all the fearsome valleys, 135
 Save that at this 'tis broke, and does not span it.
 You will be able to mount up the ruin,
 That lies aslope, and towers from the bottom." 138
 My leader stood awhile with head bent down-
 ward :
 Then said : " A bad recounting of the business
 He made who over yonder hooks the sinners." 141
 The friar then : " I heard once at Bologna
 O' the Devil faults enough, and heard among
 them,
 He is a liar, father of all falsehood." 144
 Then with great strides went on his way my
 leader,
 Somewhat disturbed with wrath in his
 appearance :
 Whereat I from the laden ones departed, 147
 After the footprints of the feet belovèd.

CANTO XXIV

IN that part of the stripling year, when newly
The Sun his locks beneath Aquarius tempers,
And to the South the nights are now departing, 3
What time upon the ground the hoar frost copies
The very image of her own white sister—
But little lasts the temper of her pencil— 6
The peasant to whom provender is lacking
Rises from bed, and looks, and sees the
meadow
All whitening ; whereat he beats his haunches, 9
Returns indoors, goes to and fro, lamenting,
Like a poor wretch what next to do not
knowing ;
Comes back, and hope once more puts in his
basket, 12
On seeing that the world has changed
appearance
In a few moments ; and his staff he fetches,
And drives his little flock abroad to pasture. 15
So did the master make me all bewildered,
When I beheld his brow in such disturbance :
And just as soon came to the hurt the plaster. 18
For, as we came unto the wasted causeway,

My leader turned to me with that sweet aspect,
 Which at the mountain foot I first had witnessed. 21
 His arms he opened, after counsel chosen
 Of some sort with himself, first well regarding
 The ruin, and he laid a grip upon me. 24
 And, like a man who, labouring and thinking,
 Seems always in advance to make provision,
 So, as towards the crest he did uplift me 27
 Of one great rock, he marked another splinter,
 Saying: "On that one be thy hold next
 fastened;
 But try first if 'tis such that it will bear thee." 30
 It was no road for one in leaden garment;
 For scarcely we, he weightless, I with pushing,
 To mount aloft from grip to grip were able. 33
 And, if it had not been that at that precinct
 The slope was shorter than upon the other—
 For him I know not—I had been quite beaten. 36
 But, since that Malebolge all slopes downward
 To the portal of the pit that lies the lowest,
 The site of every valley carries with it 39
 That one side drops, whereas the other rises.
 Howbeit we came at last up on the summit
 From which the furthest rock is rent asunder. 42
 The breathing of my lungs was so exhausted,
 When I was up, that I could fare no further:
 Therefore I sat me down at first arrival. 45
 "Thus must thou ever shake off sloth henceforward;"

The Master said, " for sitting upon feathers
Man cometh not to fame, nor under quilting ; 48
Which lacking, whosoe'er consumes his life-time
Leaves of himself on earth just such a vestige
As smoke doth leave in air, and foam in water. 51
And so do thou rise up, conquer the shortness
Of breath with spirit that wins every battle,
If with its heavy body it does not totter. 54
Of longer stair must needs be now the climbing ;
From these 'tis not enough to have departed :
If thou dost hear me, see that it avail thee." 57
I rose up then, showing myself provided
Better with breath than I had been aware of,
And said : " Fare on, for I am strong and
eager." 60
We took our way over along the rock-spur,
Which was uneven, difficult, and narrow,
And steeper a good deal than the preceding. 63
Talking I went on, not to seem enfeebled :
And from the other ditch a voice there issued,
For forming words articulate ill-suited. 66
I know not what it said, though o'er the saddle
O' the arch I was by this, that thereby crosses ;
But whosoever spoke seemed moved to anger. 69
I stood with downward look, but eyes of mortal
Could not go through the dark unto the
bottom ;
Wherefore I : " Master, hasten, pray, thy coming 72

To the next circle, and the wall dismount we ;
For, as from hence I hear, and understand not,
So down I see, and nothing do I figure." 75

" No other answer," said he, " I return thee,
Except to do it, for an honest asking
Ought to be followed by the deed, in silence." 78

The causeway we descended at the bridge-head,
Whereat with the eighth bank it made its
junction,
And then before me lay the Valley open : 81

And therewithin I saw a dire collection
Of serpents, and of such a monstrous aspect
That still the memory my blood doth curdle. 84

Let Libya with her sand make boast no longer ;
For, though she gender Jaculus, Chelydrus,
Cenchris, and Pharea, and Amphisbaena, 87

So many pestilences, or so deadly,
She never showed, with Ethiopia added,
Or that which lies beyond the Red Sea's waters. 90

Amid that gruesome and most saddening plenty
Were running naked folk and terror-stricken,
Hopeless of heliotrope or of a crevice. 93

They had their hands behind them bound with
serpents :
These same were through the loins their tail
inserting,
And head, and were in front tied up together. 96

And lo ! on one who was beside our margin

Made sudden rush a serpent, and transfixed
him,
Just where the neck is knotted to the
shoulders. 99

Nor ' O ' so quickly e'er, nor ' I,' was written,
As he blazed up and burned ; and into ashes
He, sinking down, must needs be all converted : 102

Thus being on the ground in dissolution,
The dust itself gathered itself together,
And to himself reverted in an instant. 105

So by the foremost sages is admitted
That dies, and then is born again, the Phoenix,
When she to the five hundredth year ap-
proaches : 108

Of herb or blade in life she makes not pasture,
Only of tears of incense and amomum,
And her last nest she makes of myrrh and
spikenard. 111

And as one is who falls, and how he knows not,
By power of demon that to earth doth draw
him,
Or some occlusion else that binds men's
bodies, 114

Who, when he rises up, stares round about him,
All in bewilderment at the great anguish
That he has borne, and sighs the while he
gazes, 117

Such was the sinner who just then had risen.

Oh ! power of God, how true thou art, that
 showerest
 Such awful blows by way of retribution. 120
 My guide demanded of him then who was he :
 Whereat : " From Tuscany I rained," he
 answered,
 " A short time since, into this fearsome swallow. 123
 A bestial life was my delight, not human ;
 As of the mule I was : I am Vanni Fucci ;
 A beast ; Pistoja was my worthy kennel." 126
 And to my leader I : " Bid him not slip us ;
 And ask what fault it was that down here
 thrust him :
 For a man of blood I saw him, and of passion." 129
 The sinner, who had heard, did not dissemble,
 But set both mind and face direct towards me,
 And with the sense of dismal shame he
 coloured : 132
 Then said : " It grieves me more that thou hast
 caught me
 Here in the misery where thou dost see me,
 Than when I from the other life was taken : 135
 I cannot say thee Nay to what thou askest.
 I am sent down thus far for being a robber
 In the famed sacristy of splendid vestments : 138
 And falsely once 't was laid upon another.
 But, that thou may'st not at such sight
 rejoice thee,

If e'er thou issuest from these gloomy regions, 141
Now to my message, ope thine ear, and hearken :
 ' Firstly, of Blacks Pistoja groweth leaner ;
 Then Florence makes fresh stock of folk and
 customs ; 144
Mars draws a vapour from the vale of Magra,
 That with great clouds and turbid is
 enveloped ;
 And with impetuous and cruel tempest 147
Over the Picene plain shall be a combat ;
 Whence it shall suddenly disperse the cloud-
 drift,
 So that therein shall every White be stricken.' 150
This I have said because it needs must grieve thee."

CANTO XXV

WHEN he had made an end of words, the robber
Upraised his hands with both the figs of
insult,
Crying out : " Take it, God, at thee I square
them." 3
Serpents have been endeared to me thenceforward ;
For on his neck one coiled itself that moment,
As who should say : " I let thee not speak
further," 6
And on his arms another, and fast bound him,
Clinching itself in front in such a fashion,
That even to give a jerk he could not use them. 9
Pistoja ! Alas, Pistoja, why resolve not
To turn to ashes, so to endure no longer ;
Since in ill-doing thou thy seed surpassest ? 12
I saw through all the range of hell's dark circles
No spirit so arrogant to God Almighty ;
Not him who fell at Thebes down from the
ramparts. 15
He fled away, who no word more had spoken.
And I beheld a Centaur, full of fury,
Come crying aloud : " Where is, where is, the
scoffer ? " 18

I do not think Maremma has of vipers
 So many as he had along his crupper,
 As far as where our aspect has beginning. 21
And on his shoulders, backward from the neck-cup,
 With outspread wings there lay on him a dragon,
 Breathing out flame on whosoever meets it. 24
My master said to me : " He there is Cacus,
 Who, with the rock of Aventine for shelter,
 A lake of blood made times innumerable. 27
He goes not with his brothers in one pathway,
 By reason of the guileful theft he practised
 Of the great herd that there he had adjacent ; 30
Wherefore his crooked doings had an ending
 Under the club of Hercules, which, haply,
 Gave him a hundred blows, and ten he felt
 not." 33
While he was speaking thus, that one passed
 by us,
 And down below our feet there came three
 spirits,
 Of whom nor I took notice, nor my leader, 36
Except when they cried out aloud : " Who are
 ye ? "
 Whereby unto a halt came our discoursing ;
 And then we were intent on them entirely. 39
I did not know them ; but it chanced to follow,
 As it is wont to follow, by some hazard,
 That one to name another had occasion, 42

Saying : " Wherever can be Cianfa staying ? "

Wherefore I, that my guide might be
attentive,

From chin up to my nose did lay my finger. 45

If thou art slow, now, reader, at believing
What I shall say, it will not be a marvel,
For I, who saw it, scarcely do accept it. 48

Even as I kept my eyebrows raised towards them,
Sudden, a serpent with six feet darts forward
In front of one, and clings to all his body ; 51

With its mid feet around the paunch it gripped
him,
And with its front ones held his arms in
bondage ;
Then did it bite his cheeks, one and the
other ; 54

The hinder feet along his thighs extended,
And 'twixt them both thrusting its tail, and
upward,
Upon his back across the loins outspread it. 57

Ivy was never fastened with its rootlets
In such wise upon tree as the dread monster
Entwined its own about the other's members. 60

Then, as of heated wax they had been, together
They made adherency, and mixed their colour.
Now seemed not what it was or one or other ; 63

Just as before the burning there advances
Along a paper upward a brown colour,

That is not black yet, and the white is dying. 66
The other two were staring, and cried loudly
Each one: "Alas! Agnel, how thou art
 changing!
Lo! thou art neither two nor one already." 69
The two heads were become already single,
When there appeared two countenances
 mingled
In one sole face, wherein were lost two
 persons. 72
Of fourfold strips two single arms developed:
The thighs, with them the legs, the chest and
 belly,
Members became such as were not seen ever. 75
Therein was broken every primal aspect:
Two, and yet none, did seem the form
 perverted,
And such-like went its way with sluggish
 footsteps. 78
Even as the giant lizard, changing hedgerow
Beneath the scourge tremendous of the dog-
 days,
Looks like a lightning flash across the roadway, 81
Just such did seem, coming towards the
 paunches
Of th' other two, a little fiery serpent,
Livid and black as is a grain of pepper: 84
And in that part, wherefrom at first is taken

Our aliment, one of the two it spitted :
 Then it fell down in front of him extended. 87
 The spitted gazed upon it, but said nothing ;
 Nay, rather, with arrested feet, gan yawning,
 Just as if sleep or fever had assailed him. 90
 He at the serpent stared, at him the serpent ;
 One by the wound, and by the mouth the
 other,
 Smoked mightily, and both the smokes
 commingled. 93
 Henceforth be Lucan dumb, there where he
 touches
 Upon Nassidius, and the poor Sabellus,
 And wait to hear what now comes from the
 bowstring ; 96
 Ovid on Cadmus dumb and Arethusa :
 For, if to serpent him, and her to fountain,
 He turns in poesy, no grudge I bear him : 99
 For he ne'er, brow to brow, made metamorphose
 Of natures twain, so that both forms were
 ready
 To make exchange of their material substance. 102
 They mutually responded in such fashion,
 The serpent clave his tail and spread it fork-
 wise ;
 The smitten one closed up his soles together ; 105
 The legs, with them the thighs, at the mere
 contact

Made such adherency that soon the juncture
Did make no sign at all that was apparent : 108
The cloven tail took to itself the figure
That there was being lost ; and on it supple
Became the skin, and hard that of the other. 111
I saw the arms go inward by the armpits,
And two feet, that were short upon the
monster,
Lengthen in like proportion as those
shortened. 114
And then the hinder feet, twisted together,
Became the member that a man keeps hidden :
And the poor wretch for his had two feet
sprouting. 117
While as the smoke inveils with a new colour
One and the other, and on one hand causes
The hair to grow, and on the other plucks it, 120
One raised himself erect ; down fell the other ;
Albeit diverting not their orbs ungodly,
Beneath the which each one was changing
muzzle. 123
He who was upright drew it towards the temples,
And, from the excess of substance that came
thither,
Forth of the even cheeks the ears did issue. 126
That which did not run back, and kept position,
Made on the face a nose out of that surplus,
And swelled the lips as much as it was needful. 129

The one that lay chases the muzzle forward,
And makes the ears within the head to enter,
Even as doth the snail his horns at pleasure : 132
The tongue, that he had single, and for speaking
Ready before, is cloven ; and in the other
The forked one closes up ; and the smoke
ceases. 135
The soul that to a brute had been converted
Fled, hissing as it went, along the valley ;
And after him the other talks and sputters. 138
Then upon him he turned his new-made
shoulders,
And to the third said : " I will have Buoso
scamper,
As I did, on his belly along this pathway." 141
So did I see the seventh load of ballast
Make change and counterchange. And here
the newness
Be my excuse, if my pen bungles somewhat. 144
And, albeit it befell that in some measure
Confused my eyes were, and my mind
embarrassed,
They could not flee away so surely hidden 147
But that I noted well Puccio Sciancato :
And he it was, alone of the three comrades
Who came at first, that was not changed.
The other 150
Was he, Gavillè, for whose sake thou moanest.

CANTO XXVI

FLORENCE, rejoice, for that thou art so mighty
That over sea and over land thou flappest
Thy pinions, and through hell thy name is
widespread. 3

Among the thieves five found I of such notice
Thy citizens, whence shame becomes my portion,
And thou dost not thereby climb to great
honour. 6

But, if one dreameth of the truth near morning,
Thou wilt in little time from now be ware of
What Prato wishes thee, not to say others : 9

And were it even now, 'twere not too early :
Would that it were, since that it surely must
be !

For 'twill lie heavier with my years increasing. 12

Hence we departed, and by the same staircase
The jutting stones had made for first
descending

My leader mounted up again, and drew me. 15

And, following along the lonely pathway,
Between the ridges of the spur and boulders,
The foot without the hand could make no
progress. 18

Then sorrowed I, and now afresh I sorrow,
When I direct my mind to what I witnessed,
And bridle more than is my wont my genius, 21
Lest it should run where virtue doth not guide it ;
So that, if kindly star, or something better,
Gave me that boon, I may not grudge the
blessing. 24

As many as are the fireflies that the rustic,
Resting upon the hill, when he who lightens
Our world doth keep his face less hidden from us, 27
And when the fly gives place to the mosquito,
Sees flitting down below him through the valley,
Where he, perchance, doth plough or gather
vintage, 30

With flames as manifold was the Eighth Valley
All in resplendency, as I distinguished
As soon as I was where the depth lay open. 33
As he who with the bears did wreak his
vengeance
Beheld Elijah's car at his departure,
What time straight up to heaven the horses
mounted, 36

Which with his eyes he had not power to follow
So as to see aught else but the flame only,
In likeness of a cloudlet, rising upward, 39
So through the gullet of the pit was moving
Each one ; for none the stolen soul discloses,
And every flame is bearing off a sinner. 42

I stood upon the bridge, erect and gazing,
 So that, had I not grasped a knob that jutted,
 I should have fallen, even with no one pushing. 45
 And said my guide, who so intent observed me,
 “ Within the fires thou seest are the spirits :
 Each is wrapt round with that wherewith he
 blazes.” 48
 “ Dear Master,” I replied, “ for that I hear thee,
 I am more sure, but had already fancied
 That so it was ; and wished to ask already : 51
 Who is within that fire that comes so cloven,
 On top, that from the pyre it seems ascending
 Where Eteocles lay beside his brother ? ” 54
 He answered me : “ There are within in torment
 Diomed and Ulysses : and together, .
 As once to wrath, so now they go to
 vengeance. 57
 Within the flame of them there is lamented
 The ambush of the horse that made the portal
 Whereout the noble seed of Romans issued : 60
 Within is the device bemoaned whence comes it
 That Deidamia dead still mourns Achilles :
 And there the doom is borne of Pallas’ image.” 63
 “ If they within those sparks have power of
 speaking,
 Master,” I said, “ I earnestly do pray thee,
 And pray again—be the prayer worth a
 thousand— 66

Thou do not make denial to my staying
 Until the hornèd flame shall have come
 hither :
 Thou seest that with desire I lean towards it." 69
 And he to me : " This prayer of thine is
 worthy
 Of greatest praise, and I accept it therefore.
 But that thy tongue contain itself be careful : 72
 Leave me to speak, for I have apprehended
 What thou desir'st : for they would, per-
 adventure,
 For they were Greeks, of speech of thine be
 scornful." 75
 When as the flame had come within such
 distance
 That time and place seemed fitting to my
 leader,
 I heard him speaking in such form as follows : 78
 " Oh ! ye, who twain within one fire are faring,
 If I deserved well of you while still living,
 If I deserved well of you, much or little, 81
 When in the world I wrote the lofty verses,
 Stir not, but one of you be pleased to tell us
 Whither he went to die by his own losing." 84
 The greater horn upon that flame most ancient
 Began with noise of murmuring to flicker,
 Even as doth a flame the wind makes weary : 87
 Then, waving to and fro its tip, in fashion

- As if the very tongue itself were speaking,
Cast forth of it a voice, and said : " From
 Circe 90
- When that I had departed, who withheld me
 More than a year there yonder, by Gaëta,
 (Before Æneas by that name had called it,) 93
- Nor sweetness of my son, nor filial duty
 To my old father, nor the love I owed her
 That should have made Penelope still happy, 96
- Could overcome within my breast the ardour
 I had to win experience world-embracing,
 As well of human vices as of virtue ; 99
- But out upon the open deep I put me,
 Alone, with but one bark, and those
 companions
- So few, by whom I never was deserted. 102
- One and the other shore—far as Morocco,
 And far as Spain—I saw, the Sardiens' island,
 And the others which that sea around doth
 water. 105
- I and my comrades all were old and laggard,
 What time we came unto that narrow gullet
 Where Hercules himself set up his landmarks, 108
- For signal so that none should put out further.
 On my right hand I left behind me Seville ;
 Ceuta had left already on the other. 111
- ' O brothers,' said I, ' who through hundred
 thousands

Of perils now at last have reached the Sunset,
 To this so very short a time of vigil, 114
 This only remnant left unto your senses,
 Do not deny experience of seeing,
 In the sun's wake, the world devoid of people : 117
 Consider ye the seed that ye are sprung from :
 Ye were not made to live as the brute
 creatures,
 But that ye virtue might pursue and
 knowledge.' 120
 Those comrades mine I made so sharply eager,
 With this so short oration, for the journey.
 That hardly, afterwards, could I have held ;
 them. 123
 And, with our stern directed to the morning,
 Of oars for our wild flight we made us pinions,
 Always upon the left hand somewhat gaining. 126
 Now all the stars of the other pole already
 I saw by night, and ours at such low level
 It did not rise out of the plain of ocean. 129
 Five times beneath the moon had been rekindled
 The light, and been as many times extinguished,
 After that we on the deep pass had entered, 132
 When there appeared to us a mountain darkling
 By reason of the distance ; and so lofty
 It seemed as I had never seen another. 135
 We cheered our hearts ; and soon it turned to
 weeping ;

For from the new found land arose a whirl-
wind,
And smote upon the forepart of the vessel : 138
Three times it made it spin with all the waters ;
At the fourth time it made the stern lift
upward,
And made the prow go down, as pleased
Another, 141
Until the sea had closed again above us."

CANTO XXVII

AND now the flame was still and pointing
upward
From saying no more, and going its way
already
From us, with license of the gentle poet ; 3
When lo ! another one, that came behind it,
Caused us towards its tip to turn our vision
By a confused sound that issued from it. 6
As the Sicilian bull, whence the first bellow
Was even the moan of him—and that was
rightful—
Who with his file himself had given it temper, 9
So bellowed with the voice of the imprisoned
That, notwithstanding it was only brazen,
It seemed, nathless, to be pierced through
with dolour ; 12
So, from not having any way or issue
Out from their fiery source, into its language
The melancholy words became converted. 15
But, after that their pathway they had chosen
Up through the point, giving it that vibration
The tongue itself had given them in their
passage, 18

This we heard said : " Oh ! thou to whom I
order
My voice, and who just now wert speaking
Lombard,
Saying, ' Now go thy way, no more I urge
thee,' 21
Tho' I, perchance, am somewhat late arriving,
To stay to speak with me let it not irk thee :
Thou seest it irks me not, and I am burning. 24
If into this blind world this moment only
From that sweet Latin country thou art
fallen,
Wherefrom I bring my guilt wholly unshriven, 27
Say, have they war or peace now in Romagna ?
For I was of the hills there 'twixt Urbino
And the high ridge where Tiber breaks from
prison." 30
I downwardly was still intent and stooping,
When lightly on my side my leader pressed
me,
Saying : " Do thou speak now ; this one is
Latin." 33
And I, who had the answer prompt already,
Without delaying gan to speak in this wise :
" Oh ! soul, who there below from sight art
hidden, 36
Thy dear Romagna is not, and was never,
Exempt from war within her tyrants' bosoms ;

But open I left none there now behind me. 39
 Ravenna stands as she hath stood this long time :
 The eagle of Polenta broods above her,
 So that it covers Cervia with its pinions. 42
 The land which once endured the weary trial,
 And made a gory heap of all the Frenchmen,
 Once more is in the grip of the Green Talons ; 45
 The old Mastiff, and the young one of
 Verrucchio,
 Who wrought that evil usage of Montagna,
 Where they were wonted, make their teeth
 an auger. 48
 The cities of Lamone and of Santerno
 The Lion's whelp with the white nest doth
 govern,
 Who changes sides from summer-time to
 winter. 51
 And yonder town whose flank the Savio waters,
 Just as she lies between the plain and
 mountain,
 Lives between tyranny and free condition. 54
 Now who thou art I pray thee that thou tell us :
 Be not thou more obdurate than were others :
 So may thy name i' the world hold up its
 forehead." 57
 After the fire had made some little roaring
 In its own fashion, the sharp point gan
 quiver

This way and that, and then gave breath
in this wise : 60

“ If I believed that my reply were given
To one who might the world, someday, revisit,
This flame would stay at rest without more
flutter. 63

But, forasmuch as from this depth none ever
Did make return alive, if I hear truly,
Fearless of infamy I give thee answer. 66

I was a man of arms, then corded friar,
Thinking that I, thus girt, would make
atonement.

And, of a truth, my trust approached
fulfilment, 69

Were't not for the chief priest—may evil take
him—

Who set me back into my first transgression :
And how and why, I would that thou
should'st hear me. 72

While I was still the form of bone and tissue
Of which my mother made me gift, my
doings,

Were worthy of the fox, not of the lion. 75

Sapping and mining and intelligencing,
I knew them all, and so their craft had
practised

That to the ends of earth the sound had issued. 78

When as I saw that I had reached the portion

Of my life's course where every man should
fitly
Lower the sails and stow away the tackle, 81
What at the first had pleased me then was
irksome.
Repentant and confessing, I took orders :—
Oh, hapless wretch ! and I should have
found succour. 84
The chief of the new Pharisees, on finding
Hard by the Lateran a war approaching,
(And not with Saracens, nor yet with Hebrews, 87
For every enemy of his was Christian,
And none had ever been to conquer Acre,
Or merchandizing in the Soldan's country,) 90
Nor in himself regarded highest office,
Or sacred orders, nor in me that halter
Which once was wont to make its girt ones
leaner : 93
But, just as Constantine within Soracte,
To cure his leprosy sought out Silvester,
So did he seek me out to be his master 96
To cure him of his overweening fever.
Counsel he asked of me, and I was silent,
Because his words appeared to be unsober : 99
And then he said to me : ' Let thy heart
doubt not :
Henceforth I absolve thee : now do thou
instruct me

How I may raze the walls of Palestrina. 102
I can unlock and lock the door of heaven,
As thou well knowest : for the keys are
twofold,
The which my predecessor held not precious.' 105
Then did his weighty arguments impel me
To where, meseemed, silence was worse than
speaking.
And I said : ' Father, since that thou dost
wash me 108
Clean from that sin which now I needs must
fall in,
Long promises with shortness of fulfilment
Will make thee triumph in the chair exalted.' 111
Then afterwards, when I was dead, came Francis
For me ; but one of the black demon-cherubs
Said to him, ' Take him not ; nay, do not
wrong me : 114
He must come off below among my minions,
Because he rendered the dishonest counsel ;
Since when till now I have been beside his
earlocks : 117
For who repents not cannot be forgiven ;
Nor can a man repent and will together,
Because the contradiction stands against it.' 120
Oh, wretched me ! how mightily I shuddered,
When he laid hold on me, saying to me,
' Haply

Thou didst not think that I was a logician.' 123
 To Minos then he bore me off, who twisted
 Eight times his tail upon his back unyielding ;
 And after biting it in a great fury, 126
 Said, ' He is for the thievish fire a culprit:'
 For which cause I am lost here where thou
 seëst,
 And go thus clothed upon, my doom
 lamenting." 129
 When in such wise he had his speech completed,
 The flame departed dolorous and writhing,
 And beating to and fro its horn sharp-
 pointed. 132
 We passed, both I and my conductor, further
 Along the spur as far as the next archway,
 That spans the ditch wherein is paid the
 forfeit 135
 By those who earn their load by disuniting.

CANTO XXVIII

EVEN with words unfettered, who could ever
Tell of the blood and of the wounds with fullness
That I now saw, though many times narrating ? 3
All tongues of men would fall far short, of
surety,
By reason of our speech and understanding,
Which have scant bosom for such com-
prehension. 6
If all the folk to-day made one assembly
Who on Apulia's soil, chosen of fortune,
In time of old were mourners of their life-
blood, 9
Shed by the Trojans, or i' the long campaigning
That brought so high a pile of rings for booty,
As Livy hath recorded (and he errs not) ; 12
With all the folk who felt distress of smiting
By reason of withstanding Robert Guiscard ;
And those, beside, whose bones may still be
gathered 15
At Ceperan, where each Apulian showed him
Faithless ; or there again by Tagliacozzo,
Where without weapons old Alardo con-
quered ; 18

And this should show his limb transpierced, and
 that one
 His limb lopped off, naught would it be to
 equal
 The loathsome spectacle of the Ninth Valley. 21
 Never a cask, from losing mid- or side-piece,
 Is riven so utterly as one I noticed,
 Burst from the chin right to the lower passage : 24
 Between the legs were hanging down the
 entrails ;
 The pluck was showing, and the bag repulsive
 That turns whate'er is swallowed into ordure. 27
 While I with all my might am set to see him,
 He stared at me, and with his hands he opened
 His bosom, saying : " See now, how I tear
 me ; 30
 See in what manner Mahomet is mangled :
 Ali there goes his way before me, weeping,
 Cleft in the face from chin unto the forelock. 33
 And all the rest of those whom here thou seëst,
 When living, were the so wers of dissension
 And schism ; and therefore in this wise are
 cloven. 36
 A devil is here behind, who doth adjust us
 In such a cruel sort, anew subjecting
 Each of this ream to the sword's edge, as often 39
 As we have circled round the doleful roadway ;
 By reason that the wounds are re-united

Ere any one may pass again before him : 42
 But who art thou who on the rock-spur peerest,
 Perchance with purpose to delay in going
 To the doom adjudged upon thine own
 indictments ?" 45
 "Nor death hath reached him yet," my master
 answered,
 "Nor guilt doth bring him to be here tormented,
 But, full experience to bestow upon him, 48
 On me, who am dead, is laid the task to bring
 him
 Through hell down here from circle unto circle :
 And this is true, as I to thee am speaking." 51
 More than five score there were who, when they
 heard him,
 Stopped in the pit their course to gaze upon
 me,
 Forgetting in amaze their sore affliction. 54
 "Tell Fra Dolcino, then, to make equipment,
 Thou who, perhaps, wilt shortly see the
 sunlight,
 Unless he seeks to follow me soon hither, 57
 Of food-store in such wise that a deep snowfall
 Bring not the victory to the Novaran,
 Which otherwise to achieve were no light
 matter." 60
 With one foot lifted ready to go forward,
 Did Mahomet deliver me this message ;

Then on the ground he fixed it for departing. 63
 Another, with a sword-thrust through his gullet,
 With nose lopped off close underneath the
 eyebrows,
 Who had not more than one ear only left him, 66
 Staying behind to gaze in his amazement
 With all the rest, before the rest set open
 His pipe, which outwardly was all vermilion : 69
 And thus he said : " O thou whom guilt
 condemns not,
 And whom I saw above in Latin country,
 Unless too great resemblance doth deceive
 me, 72
 Recall to mind Peter of Medicina,
 If ever that sweet plain thou dost revisit,
 That slopes to Marcabò down from Vercelli : 75
 And make thou known to two of Fano's noblest,
 To Messer Guido, and Angiolello also,
 That, if foreseeing here is not all idle, 78
 They will be cast adrift from out their vessel,
 And bound in sack with stone, near La
 Cattolica,
 By the betrayal of a felon tyrant. 81
 Between the isles of Cyprus and Majorca
 Never did Neptune see a crime so monstrous,
 Nor wrought by pirates, nor by folk Argolic. 84
 That traitor, he who sees with one eye
 only,

And holds the land which one now here beside
 me
 Would fain have fasted to this day from
 seeing, 87
 Will make them come to hold a parley with
 him,
 Then make such work as 'gainst Focara's
 tempest
 Will make no need for them of prayer or
 offering." 90
 And I to him : " Point out and tell me plainly,
 If thou would'st have me take up news about
 thee,
 Which is the one of the embittered vision ? " 93
 With that upon the jaw of one, his comrade,
 His hand he laid, and set his mouth wide
 open,
 Crying out, " This is he ; no word he utters. 96
 He is it who, an exile, whelmed the doubting
 In Cæsar's breast, maintaining that, once
 ready,
 Alway with loss a man did suffer waiting." 99
 Oh ! how he seemed to me to be bewildered,
 There, with the tongue cut short within his
 throttle,
 Curio, who in speaking was so hasty. 102
 And one, who had one hand and the other
 wanting,

The crippled stumps through that mirk air
 uplifting
 So that the dripping blood made his face
 loathsome, 105
 Cried: "Thou wilt surely, too, remember
 Mosca,
 Who said, ah me! 'A thing that's done is
 over:'
 Which was to Tuscan folk a seed of evil." 108
 Then added I: "And to thy clan death-
 warrant:"
 Whereat he, heaping sorrow up with sorrow,
 Went on his way, like one distraught with
 sadness. 111
 But I remained, that multitude regarding,
 And saw a thing such that I should be fearful
 Without more proof so much as to recount it, 114
 Were it not that my conscience doth assure me,
 The good ally that every man emboldens
 With sense of innocency for his breastplate. 117
 Certain I saw—and still I seem to see it—
 A trunk without a head go in like manner
 The others of the mournful flock were going: 120
 And the lopped head 'twas holding by the
 tresses,
 Swung with the hand in fashion of a lantern:
 And that looked hard at us, "Woe's me"
 repeating. 123

He made himself a lamp for his own using.
And they were two in one, one in two also :
How it can be, He knows who so ordains it. 126
When it had come right underneath our
archway,
Its arm, the head along with it, it lifted,
So as to make its words come closer to us : 129
Which were : " Behold the punishment
distressing,
Thou who dost pass, viewing the dead, and
breathest :
See if there any is as great as this is. 132
And that thou may'st bear tidings of me yonder,
Know I am Bertram, hight of Born, who
rendered
To the young king the help of evil counsel. 135
I set at mutual war the son and father.
Achitophel did not do more by David
And Absalom with his perfidious goadings. 138
For that I parted persons joined so closely,
Even so, alas, I bear my own brain parted
From its first source, which in this trunk
continues. 141
Thus hath the counterstroke in me observance."

CANTO XXIX

THE folk so many, and the wounds so diverse
Had in such sort my orbs of sight made drunken
That they were fain to fall to idle weeping. 3
But Virgil said to me : " Pray, what dost stare at ?
Why does thy vision nothing find to rest on
Save down among the dismal shades dis-
membered ? 6
Thou did'st not do so in the other Valleys.
Consider, if thou hast a mind to reckon,
That two and twenty miles this valley circles : 9
The moon is underneath our feet already ;
The time is short that still to us is granted,
And there is more to see than what thou
seest." 12
" Hadst thou given heed," I made him answer
straightway,
" Unto the reason wherefor I was gazing,
Perchance thou hadst allowed me stay yet
longer." 15
Meanwhile my guide went on, and I behind him
Was following, making my reply already,
And adding furthermore : " Within that
hollow, 18

Where I was keeping thus mine eyes on sentry,
I think a spirit of my blood is moaning
The guilt that there below doth cost so dearly." 21
Then said my master : " Let not from hence-
forward
Thy thought expend itself for naught upon him ;
Heed other things, and leave him there
remaining ; 24
For at the gangway-foot I saw him pointing
Thee out, and shaking angrily his finger,
And heard him called by name Geri del Bello. 27
Thou wast just then so utterly entangled
With him who of old time held Altaforte,
Thou didst not look that way till he departed." 30
" Oh ! leader mine, the violent death he suffered,
Which he not yet hath had avenged," I
answered,
" By any one who in the shame is partner, 33
Made him disdainful ; wherefore, without
speaking
To me, he went his way : so I explain it :
And therein hath he won still more my pity." 36
Thus did we speak, as far along the rock-spur
As the first place that shows the other valley,
If more of light there were, all to the bottom. 39
When as we were upon the utmost cloister
Of Malebolge, so that its lay brethren
Could come within the compass of our eyesight, 42

There shot against me divers lamentations,
 Which had their arrows tipped at point with
 pity ;
 Wherefore I with my hands my ears did cover. 45
 Such as, if from July until September
 From all the hospitals of Valdichiana,
 And of Sardinia, and of Maremma, 48
 The ailments in one fosse were all together,
 The dole would be, was here : and such stench
 issued
 As there is wont to issue from limbs gangrened. 51
 So we came down upon the last embankment
 From the long rock-spur, bearing still to
 leftward ;
 And then my sense of vision was more lively 54
 Down towards the bottom, where unfailing justice,
 The handmaid of the Lord Most High, doth
 punish
 The counterfeiters who are here recorded. 57
 I do not think a sight of greater sadness
 Was the whole people ailing in Ægina—
 What time the very air so teemed with malice 60
 That, even to smallest worms, the living creatures
 All perished ; and the ancient folk thereafter
 (Following what the poets hold authentic) 63
 Gat restoration from the seed of emmets—
 Than was to see throughout that darksome
 valley

In diverse stooks the languid spirits drooping. 66
This on the belly, that upon the shoulders,
 One of another lay ; and this one, crawling,
 Changed his position on the dismal pathway. 69
Without a word we step by step went onward,
 Gazing and listening to the sickly wretches,
 Who had not strength to raise their ghostly
 bodies. 72
I saw two sitting propped against each other,
 As a pan is propped against a pan for
 warming,
 Spotted from head to foot with scabby
 blotches. 75
And never curry-comb did I see wielded
 In hand of groom expected by his master,
 Or one who all unwillingly keeps vigil, 78
As each of them upon himself was plying
 The bite of his own nails in that wild frenzy
 Of itching that can find no other succour. 81
And in such wise the nails the scabs were
 stripping
 As doth a knife the scales upon a mullet,
 Or other fish that, haply, hath them larger. 84
“ O thou who with thy fingers art unpicking
 Thy mail,” to one of them began my leader,
 “ And makest of them pincers on occasion, 87
Tell us if any Latin is among them
 Who herewithin do bide : so may suffice thee

- Thy nail eternally for this its labour." 90
- "Latins are we, whom thou dost see thus wasted,
Here both of us : " one of them answered,
weeping,
- "But who art thou that puttest us such
question ? " 93
- And said my guide : " I am one who am
descending
With this live man, from ledge to ledge down
hither ;
And to show hell to him is my intention." 96
- At that the mutual support was broken ;
And each one turned himself toward me,
trembling,
With others who had heard him in re-echo. 99
- My gentle master came close up beside me,
Saying : " Say thou to them whate'er thou
wishest."
- And I began, seeing that he so willed it : 102
- "So may your memory not take flight and vanish,
In the first world, from ken of minds of
mortals,
But under many suns continue living, 105
- Say to me who ye are, and of what peoples :
Let not your doom, so shocking and so
irksome,
Deter you from revealing what I ask you." 108
- "Arezzo was my city," one made answer :

“ Albert of Siena to the stake despatched me :
But that for which I died brings me not hither. 111
True 'tis that, speaking as in jest, I told him
That I could raise myself in air by flying :
And he, who had small wit and idle fancies, 114
Would have me show the art to him ; and, solely
That Dædalus I did not make him, made me
Be burned by one who stood to him as father. 117
But to the furthestmost of the ten Valleys
For alchemy, that in the world I practised,
Minos, who may not make mistake, con-
demned me.” 120
And to the bard I said : “ Now were there ever
Such empty-pated folk as those of Siena ?
Certainly not the French folk by a long way.” 123
Whereat the other leprous one who heard me
Made answer to my saying : “ Excepting
Stricca,
Who knew the way to spend in moderation, 126
And Nicholas, who was the first inventor
Of using cloves in that expensive fashion
I' the garden where such kind of seed is
rooted : 129
Except, too, the brigade among whom squandered
Caccia d'Ascian his vineyard and great forest,
And Abbagliato made such waste of wisdom. 132
But, so that thou may'st know who thus supports
thee

'Gainst those of Siena, whet thine eye towards
me,
So that my face may make thee a good
answer : 135

I am Capocchio's shade, thou wilt discover :
By chymic art I counterfeited metals :
And thou must recollect, if I well eye thee, 138
How that I was an excellent ape of nature."

CANTO XXX

IN time of old, when Juno's wrath was kindled
For Semele, against the Theban household,
As time and time again she manifested, 3
King Athamas became so sore demented
That, as he saw his wife with two young
children
Go, laden on either hand with such sweet
burden, 6
He cried : " Let us set nets, that I may take
them,
The lioness and young lions, at the passage :"
And then his talons pitiless extended, 9
Laying hold of one, who had for name Learchus,
And wheeled him round, and on a rock he
smote him :
And straight she drowned herself with the
other burden. 12
And, when the wheel of fortune had brought
under
The Trojans' eminence that ventured all things,
So that the realm and king were broke
together, 15
Hecuba, wretched, sorrowful, and captive,

After she saw Polyxena in death-throe,
 And when she recognised her Polydorus 18
 Lying upon the sea-beach, in her dolour,
 Bereft of senses, like a dog gan barking :
 So much had grief her understanding wrested. 21
 But neither Theban furies, nor yet Trojan,
 Were ever seen in any one so cruel,
 In goading beasts, and still less human
 members, 24
 As in two shades I saw, livid and naked,
 That, snapping, ran about in the same manner
 As doth a hog for which the sty is opened. 27
 One reached Capocchio, and set its tushes
 Upon the jointing of his neck, and dragged him,
 Rasping his belly on the solid pavement. 30
 And the Aretine, who had not ceased from
 trembling,
 Said : " That hobgoblin there is Gianni
 Schicchi ;
 And thus he goes, rabid, and mangles others." 33
 " Oh ! " said I to him : " so may not the other
 Fix in thy back its teeth, let it not tire thee
 To say who is it, ere it hence hath flitted." 36
 And he to me : " That is a soul of old time,
 Of wicked Myrrha, who unto her father,
 Outside of lawful love, became a lover. 39
 She came to sin with him in the like manner,
 By counterfeiting of another's figure,

As the other, who goes yonder, took upon
him, 42
Claiming the lady of the stud for wages,
Himself to counterfeit Buoso Donati,
Making a will with formal attestation." 45
And after the two rabid ones had passed us,
On whom my eye I had held fixed, I turned it
To gaze upon the rest of the ill-fated. 48
I saw one, as it were, made in lute-fashion,
If only he had had his groinward region
Lopped at the part which man hath
bifurcated. 51
Burdensome dropsy, that so disproportions
The members with the humour ill converted
That face with belly hath no correspondence, 54
Wrought upon him to keep his lips wide open ;
As doth the hectic who, in thirsty torment,
Turns one towards the chin, the other upward. 57
" O ye, who without any pain soever
Are in the woful world, and why I know not,"
Said he to us, " look, and give full attention 60
Unto the misery of Master Adam.
I had, alive, enough of that I wanted ;
And now, alas ! I crave a drop of water. 63
The little brooks that from the Casentino
Adown its green hillsides run into Arno,
Making their channels cool and moist beneath
them, 66

Stand ever in my sight—nor vain the vision !
 For far more thoroughly their image dries me
 Than this disease that wastes away my
 features. 69

Justice unbending, that assigns my trial,
 Takes from the place wherein I sinned
 occasion

To put my sighs in flight in greater measure. 72

There is Romena, where I counterfeited
 The mintage with the impress of the Baptist :
 Wherefore I left my body up there in cinders. 75

But, could I here behold the souls unhappy
 Of Guido, or Alexander, or their brothers,
 I would not give the sight for Branda's
 fountain. 78

Herein is one already, if the rabid
 Shades that are going all around speak truly.
 What boots it me, who have my limbs in
 trammels ? 81

Were I so nimble still that I was able
 In a hundred years to go but one inch only,
 I had put myself already on the pathway 84

In search for him among this folk so shocking ;
 For all it is eleven miles in circuit,
 And nowhere less than half a mile across it. 87

'Tis by their doing I am in such household :
 'Twas they who led me on to strike the florins
 That had in them three carats of base metal." 90

And I to him : " Who are the pair of abjects
That smoke just like a moistened hand in
winter,

Lying close pressed beside thy right-hand
borders ? "

93

" Here found I them—and since they have made
no movement—

What time I rained into this chasm," he
answered,

" Nor do I think they will for everlasting.

96

One is the woman, Joseph's false accuser :

A Greek of Troy the other, the false Sinon :

So foul a reek they cast from their sharp
fever."

99

And one of them, who took it, peradventure,

As insult to be named in such dark fashion,

Smote with his fist upon his paunch of leather,

102

Which, even as it had been a drum, resounded.

And Master Adam smote him on the visage

With his forearm, which did not seem less solid;

105

Saying: " Though power to move is taken from me,

By reason of my members which are heavy,

I have my arm unfettered for such business."

108

Whereat he answered : " What time thou wast
going

Unto the stake thou hadst it not so ready,

But so and more thou hadst when thou wast
coining."

111

To him the dropsied : " Therein sayest thou
truly ;

But thou wast not at all so true a witness,
When thou wast asked in Troy to give true
answer."

114

" If I spake falsely, thou didst make false
coinage ;"

Said Sinon, " I am here for one fault only,
And thou for more than any other demon."

117

" Recall to mind the horse, thou perjured liar,"

Answered the one who had his paunch
inflated,

" And be thy ill that all the world doth know it."

120

" And be thy ill the thirst, wherefrom is cracking
Thy tongue," replied the Greek, " and the foul
water

That thus before thy eyes piles up thy
belly."

123

At that the one of money : " Thus gapes open
Thy mouth, as is its wont, but to speak evil.

For, if I am athirst, and humour bloats me,

126

Thou hast thy burning and thy head that pains
thee,

And to lick up the mirror of Narcissus

Would'st not need many words of invitation."

129

On listening to them I was set entirely,

When said the Master to me : " Go on staring !

For but a little, and I quarrel with thee."

132

CANTO XXXI

ONE and the selfsame tongue it was first stung
me,
So that it tinged my cheeks, one and the other,
And then held out to me the healing balsam. 3
So I have heard the lance of great Achilles
And of his sire was wont to be occasion
At first of sad, and then of kindly, guerdon. 6
We turned our back upon the wretched valley
Up by the bank that all around engirds it,
Making our way across without discoursing. 9
Here there was less than night and less than
daylight,
So that my vision went not far before me.
But I was ware a mighty trumpet sounded, 12
So loud it had made faint all voice of thunder ;
Which, following along its course reversewise,
My eyes entirely to one place directed. 15
After the rout of dolorous remembrance,
When Charlemagne lost all that sacred peerage,
Not even Orlando blew a blast so dreadful. 18
But a brief while I had my head turned thither,
When seemed to come in sight many tall
towers :

Whence I : “ Dear Master, say what is yon
city ? ” - 21

And he to me : “ By reason that thou runnest
Too far ahead athwart the gloom, it happens
That then thou wanderest in imagination. 24

That wilt see well, on coming to close quarters,
How much the senses are deceived at distance :
Spur thyself, therefore, on a little faster : ” 27

Then took me by the hand affectionately,
And said : “ Or ever we go further forward,
So that the fact may seem to thee less wondrous, 30
Know that those yonder are not towers, but
giants ;

And they are in the pit, around the bankside,
One and all hidden from the navel downward.” 33

As, when a heavy mist is dissipated,
The sight, little by little, again doth figure
That which the haze that piles the air had
hidden, 36

So, piercing through that air obscure and heavy,
And near and nearer to the brink approaching,
Fled error from me, and grew fear upon me : 39

For even as above her circling ramparts
Monteregione crowns herself with towers,
In such wise towered aloft with half their body 42

Out of the pit above its girdling border
The dreadful giants whom from heaven Jove
threatens

Even unto this day, what time it thunders. 45
 And I discerned the face of one already,
 Shoulders and breast, and a great part of
 belly,
 And all along the ribs both arms depending. 48
 Nature, in sooth, when she gave up the making
 Of such like living creatures, did quite rightly
 To take from Mars such doers of his bidding. 51
 And, if of elephants and whales she doth not
 Repent herself, he who regards it subtly
 Therein will hold her still more just and prudent. 54
 For, where the equipment and the use of reason
 Are joined to ill intent and power of action,
 No sort of refuge can folk make against it. 57
 His face in length and breadth had such appear-
 ance
 As hath at Rome the pine-cone of St. Peter :
 And all the other bones in its proportion ; 60
 So that the bank, which served the part of apron
 Down from the middle, showed of him above it
 Fully so much that even to reach the tresses 63
 Three Frisians had made an idle boasting :
 Because I saw of great palms' breadths full
 thirty
 From the place downward where men clasp
 their mantles. 66
 " Rafel maí amech zabí almi : "
 Such outcry 'gan the fearful mouth to utter,

To which no sweeter canticles were fitting. 69
And unto him my leader : " Soul insensate,
 Keep to thy horn, and with it ease thy trouble,
 When anger pricketh thee or other passion : 72
Look to thy neck, and thou wilt find the shackle
 That holdeth thee in bonds, O soul
 bemuddled,
 And see it where it girds thy mighty bosom." 75
Then said to me : " He is his own accuser :
 This one is Nimrod, from whose evil notion
 One language in the world is not used only. 78
Leave him alone, and waste no words upon him :
 For so to him is every single language
 As his to others, which is known to no man." 81
And thereupon we made a further journey,
 Turning to left, and at a shot of cross-bow
 We found the next one, fiercer much and
 bigger. 84
To gird him, of what sort had been the master
 I cannot tell you, but he kept engirded
 In front the other arm, the right behind him, 87
With single chain, that on the neck and down-
 ward
 So held him coiled, that on the part
 uncovered
 It wound itself as far as the fifth turning. 90
" This haughty one would be experimented
 Of his own potency 'gainst Jove Most Highest,"

My leader said, "whence he hath such
 requital. 9:
 He Ephialtes hight; he made those essays
 What time the giants put the gods in terror:
 He moves no more the arms that then he
 flourished." 9:
 And I to him: "If it can be, fain would I
 That of Briareus, the immeasurable,
 Mine eyes might have experimental know-
 ledge." 9:
 Whereat he answered: "Thou shalt see Antæus,
 Not far from here, who speaks, and is un-
 fettered,
 Who will set us in the lowest depth of evil. 10:
 He thou would'st see is yonder, much more distant,
 And he is bound, and fashioned just like this
 one,
 Save that he seems in countenance more
 savage." 10:
 Never was yet an earthquake so tremendous
 That it could shake a tower as violently
 As Ephialtes shook, with sudden impulse. 10:
 Then had I greater fear of death than ever;
 And nothing more beyond the dread was
 needful,
 Had I not seen the twisted bands that held
 him. 11:
 Then straightway we proceeded further forward,

And to Antæus came, who five ells fully
 Issued, beside the head, out of the hollow. 114
 "O thou who in the valley chosen of fortune,
 The valley which made Scipio heir of glory,
 When Hannibal retreated with his army, 117
 A thousand lions once didst bring for booty—
 And who, if thou hadst been in that great
 battle
 Thy brothers fought, as some, it seems, still
 fancy, 120
 The children of the earth would have been
 victors—
 Set us below, and let not scorn possess thee,
 There where the cold intense locks up Cocytus. 123
 Make us not go to Tityos or Typhæus :
 This one can give of that which here is yearned
 for.
 Bow thyself then, nor curl thy lip disdainful ; 126
 Renown he yet may in the world restore thee ;
 For he doth live, and long life still doth look for,
 Unless Grace call him to itself untimely." 129
 Thus said the Master ; and the other, hastening,
 Outstretched the hands, and took therewith
 my leader,
 Whence Hercules once felt a mighty pressure. 132
 Virgil, when he was ware that he was taken,
 Said to me : " Come this way, that I may take
 thee ; "

Then wrought that he and I were but one
parcel. 135

Just as, to look at Carisenda tower,
Under the leaning side, when clouds are going
Over its top, it seems to bow to meet them, 138
Antæus seemed to me, who stood expectant
To see him stoop. And it was such a moment
That I would fain have gone by other high-
way. 141

But down upon the bottom, which both Judas
And Lucifer ingulfs, he lightly placed us :
Nor, stooping so, made he there any tarry ; 144
But, like a mast in ship, straightway rose
upward.

CANTO XXXII

IF I had store of rhymes rugged and grating,
As would be proper for the dismal hollow
Whereon the other rocks are all supported, 3
I would express the juices of my fancy
In fuller sort ; but, seeing that such I have
not,
Not without fear I bring myself to speaking. 6
For 'tis no enterprise to be made light of,
The base of all the universe to picture ;
Nor for a tongue that calls 'Mamma' or
'Babbo.' 9
But may those ladies to my verse be helpers
Who gave Amphion aid for Thebes' enclosing,
So that from fact the word be not discordant. 12
O populace, above all miscreated,
Ye who are in the place so hard to speak of,
Better had ye been here or sheep or wild-
goats. 15
When we were down within the pit of darkness
Under the giant's feet, a good deal lower,
And on the lofty wall I still was gazing, 18
I heard one say to me : " Heed how thou
steppest ;

See to it that with thy soles thou dost not
 trample
 Upon the heads of the poor weary brothers." 21
 Whereat I turned, and I beheld before me,
 And underfoot, a lake that, by frost's doing,
 The semblance had of glass, and not of water. 24
 Never so thick a veil above its current
 The Danube drew in Austria in winter,
 Nor Tanaïs beneath the cold sky yonder, 27
 As here there was : for though right down upon it
 All Tambernicch had fallen, or Pietrapana,
 Even on its edge it had not made a crackle. 30
 And, in what wise the frog doth sit a-croaking,
 With muzzle out of water, in the season
 When often dreams the rustic maid of gleaning, 33
 In such wise livid to where shame is patent
 The doleful shades within the ice were planted,
 To music as of storks their teeth attuning. 36
 Each of them kept his countenance turned down-
 ward ;
 The cold from mouth, and the sad heart from
 eyelids,
 Among them seeks and wrings its testimony. 39
 When I had looked some little while about me,
 I dropped my eyes and saw two strained so
 closely
 That they had tangled up their hair together. 42
 " Tell me, ye two who thus strain close your bosoms,"

Said I, "who are ye?" And they their
necks set backward.

And, when they had their faces raised
towards me,

45

Their eyes, that had been only moist within
them,

Gushed over at the brims; and then the
freezing

Congeaed the tears between them, and fast
locked them.

48

Never did clamp a log with log engirdle

So firmly: whereat they, as might two he-
goats,

Butted together: such great wrath o'ercame
them.

51

And one, who both his ears had lost by reason

Of the fierce cold, still with his face set down-
ward,

Said: "Why so much thyself in us dost
mirror?"

54

If thou desir'st to know who are this couple,

The valley from whose slopes Bisencio trickles

Was theirs, and was their father Albert's
also.

57

They issued from one body; and all Caïna

Thou might'st search through, and not a
shade more worthy

Would'st find of being set in frosty jelly;

60

Not him on whom a breach in breast and shadow
 Was at one stroke made by the hand of
 Arthur ;
 Nor yet Focaccia, nor this one who blocks me 63
 So with his head that I see naught beyond him,
 And who for name had Sassol Mascheroni :
 Now know'st well who he was, if thou art
 Tuscan. 66
 And, that to more discourse thou may'st not
 put me,
 Know thou that I was Camicion de' Pazzi,
 And am expecting Carlin to excuse me." 69
 Thereafter saw I a thousand faces, doglike
 Made by the cold, whence comes to me a
 shudder,
 And ever will, at sight of frozen shallows. 72
 And, while as we were going to the centre
 Whereto all that hath weight doth come
 together,
 And I was shivering in that cold eternal— 75
 Was it heaven's will, or destiny, or fortune,
 I know not, but—among the heads a-faring,
 Full hard I smote my foot on some one's
 visage. 78
 Weeping he yelled to me : " Why dost thou
 pound me ?
 Unless thou comest to increase the vengeance
 Of Mont' Aperti, why dost thou molest me ? " 81

- And I : " Dear master, here, I pray, await me,
 That I may end a doubt regarding this one :
 Then, howsoe'er thou wilt, shalt make me
 hasten." 84
- My leader halted : and I thus addressed him
 Who all the while was stubbornly blasphem-
 ing :
- " What sort art thou who thus dost rail at
 others ? " 87
- " Pray who art thou, who goest through Ante-
 nora,
 Smiting," he answered, " others on their
 faces,
 So that, wert thou alive, it were too heavy ? " 90
- " Alive I am : and dear to thee it may be,"
 Thus was my answer : " if for fame thou
 seekest,
 That I should put thy name 'mongst other
 records." 93
- And he to me : " Contrary boon I yearn for :
 Begone from hence, and give me no more
 worry :
 Ill know'st thou how in this morass to
 flatter." 96
- Then by the back-hair of his nape I took him,
 And said : " There will be need that thou
 shouldst name thee,
 Or else have not a hair hereon remaining." 99

Then he to me : " For all thou pluck my
 tresses,
 Nor will I tell thee who I am, nor show thee,
 Not though thou give my head a thousand
 buffets." 102

I had his hair now in my hand well twisted,
 And from his scalp more locks than one had
 taken ;
 He the while barking, with his eyes cast
 downwards ; 105

When cried another : " What doth ail thee,
 Bocca ?
 Doth not suffice thee with thy jaws to
 clatter,
 Unless thou also bark ? What devil pricks
 thee ? " 108

" Ah ! now," I said, " no word from thee I ask
 for,
 Villainous traitor ; for, unto thy shaming,
 I will take back veracious news about thee." 111

" Be off," he answered, " and what likes thee,
 tell it ;
 But hold not peace, if out from hence thou
 goest,
 Of him who had, just now, his tongue so
 ready : 114

Here he bewails the money of the Frenchmen.
 ' I saw,' thus canst thou say, ' him of Duera

Down in the place where sinners have cool
weather.' 117
And if thou shouldst be asked who were the
others,
Thou hast beside thee him of Beccheria,
The one whose throat-piece Florence cut in
sunder. 120
Gianni del Soldanier, I think, is lying
Beyond, with Ganellone and Tebaldello,
Who oped Faënza's gates when men were
sleeping." 123
We had already left him well behind us,
When I espied two icebound in one hollow,
So that one head was cap unto the other. 126
And, as a man devours a loaf when famished,
So he above his teeth i' the other fastened
Just where the brain and nape are joined
together. 129
Not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the temples
Of Menalippus, in disdainful fury,
Than he the skull did and the other portions. 132
"O thou who showest, by display so beastlike,
Hate to the head below thee that thou eatest,
Tell me the why," I said, "upon this bar-
gain ; 135
If thou bemoan'st on his account with reason,
I, knowing what you two are, and what his
trespass,

I' the upper world will make thee fit
requitall,
If that wherewith I speak become not withered." ¹³⁸

CANTO XXXIII

His mouth uplifted from the fearsome morsel
That sinner, wiping it upon the tresses
Of that same head whose hinder part he wasted. 3
Then he began : “ Thou bidst me make renewal
Of hopeless grief, that wrings my heart already
At the mere thought, or e'er a word I utter. 6
But be my words the seed, and be the fruitage
Infamy to the traitor I am gnawing,
Thou shalt see one shed tears and speak
together. 9
I know not who thou art, nor in what manner
Art thou come here below ; but man of
Florence
Thou seemest, of a truth, when I do hear thee. 12
Thou must know, then, I was Count Ugolino,
And this one was Ruggieri, the Archbishop.
Now will I tell thee why I am such a neigh-
bour. 15
That, by effect of his malignant scheming,
Trusting myself to him, I first was taken,
And after died, it needs not to make mention. 18
But that whereof thou canst not have acquaint-
tance,

That is, to what degree my death was cruel,
 Now thou shalt hear, and know if he provoked
 me. 21

A little rift within the moulting-chamber,
 Which now hath got from me the name of
 hunger,
 And wherein still must others be imprisoned, 24
 Had shown to me already through its fissure
 Full many moons, when the ill sleep befell me,
 That rent for me the curtain of the future. 27

This one, it seemed to me, as lord and master,
 Hunted the wolf and wolf-cubs on the hill-
 side
 That lets not Pisan men have sight of Lucca. 30
 With bitch-hounds, lean, and keen of scent and
 cunning,
 Gualandi, with Sismondi, and with Lan-
 franchi,
 He in advance of all the van had posted. 33

After a quite short course both sire and offspring
 Seemed to me weary, and with fangs sharp-
 pointed
 Their flanks I seemed to see the others rending. 36

When that I was awake before the morrow,
 I saw my children, who were with me, weeping
 And clamouring for bread amid their slumber. 39
 Cruel indeed thou art, if now thou griev'st not
 At thought of what was to my heart foreboded :

And if thou weep'st not, what art wont to
weep for ? 42
By this they were awake ; and the hour was
nearing
When custom was to bring our day's pro-
vision,
And each, by reason of his dream, was
doubting. 45
And I was ware that some one nailed the outlet
At foot of the dreadful tower : then in
the faces
Of my dear sons I stared, not one word
speaking : 48
I wept not ; so to stone I turned within me.
They wept, and said my little Anselm :
' Father,
How thou art staring at us ; pray, what is it ? ' 51
But still I shed no tear, nor made I answer
On all that day, nor on the night that
followed,
Till on the world another sun had issued. 54
When a faint ray of light had made its entrance
Within that prison of sorrow, and I discovered
Upon four faces mine own selfsame aspect, 57
On both my hands I bit, for very anguish.
And they, supposing that I only did it
From wish to eat, rose up all on a sudden, 60
And said, ' O father, less would be our dolour,

If thou wouldst eat of us : thou gav'st us
 clothing
 Of these poor robes of flesh : do thou despoil us.' 63
 I calmed me then, not to increase their sadness.
 That and another day we all stayed silent.
 Ah ! thou hard earth, why then didst thou
 not open ? 66
 When we had come unto the fourth day, Gaddo
 Flung himself at my feet with arms extended,
 Saying, ' My father, why dost thou not help
 me ? ' 69
 With that he died ; and, surely as thou dost see
 me,
 I saw the three drop one by one before me,
 'Twixt the fifth day and sixth : then, blind
 already, 71
 I set myself a-groping o'er each body :
 And two whole days, when they were dead, I
 called them.
 Then hunger wrought a greater work than
 sorrow." 71
 This having spoken, with distorted eyeballs,
 Again upon the wretched skull he fastened
 With teeth that, like a dog's, were strong to
 crunch it. 7
 Ah ! Pisa ! thou reproach of all the peoples
 Dwelling in that fair land where " Si " is
 spoken,

Since that thy neighbours tarry with their
 vengeance, 81
 Let La Caprara move, and La Gorgona,
 And make a bank even in the jaws of Arno,
 That he may drown each living soul within
 thee : 84
 For, even had Count Ugolino got him
 The fame of the betrayer of thy castles,
 No right hadst thou on such a cross to fasten 87
 His sons : their younger age of guilt acquitted,
 Thou younger Thebes ! Uguccion and Brigata,
 And the other two my song above doth
 mention. 90
 We passed on further, where the frosty rigour
 In a rough sort another folk doth swaddle,
 Not with the face downcast, but all thrown
 backward. 93
 Weeping itself to them allows not weeping ;
 And woe, that on the eyeballs finds arrestment,
 Is turned within, to make increase of anguish. 96
 For the first tear-drops gather in a cluster,
 And, as might be a vizor all of crystal,
 Fill to the brim the cup beneath the eyelid. 99
 And notwithstanding that, as on a callus,
 By reason of the extreme cold all feeling
 Had given up its lodgment in my visage, 102
 Even now, meseemed, I felt a faint wind
 blowing.

And such advantage hath this Tolomea
That oftentimes the soul doth fall down
hither
Or ever Atropos doth set it moving. 126
And, for that thou may'st pluck for me more
gladly
From off my countenance the glazen tear-
drops,
Know that, the moment that the soul turns
traitor, 129
As I did, straight its body is taken from it
By an evil spirit, who governs it thereafter,
The while revolves in full its time allotted. 132
The soul into this cistern tumbles headlong.
And, haply, still above appears the body
Of the very shade that winters here behind me : 135
Him thou shouldst know if thou be new arriving :
'Tis Branca d'Oria ; and years full many
Have passed since he was thus shut up in
prison." 138
" I think," said I to him, " thou dost deceive
me,
For Branca d'Oria died not whensoever,
And eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and puts on
raiment." 141
" In the pit of Evil-Claws above," he answered,
" The place where the tenacious pitch is boiling,
Not yet had Michael Zanche made arrival, 144

When this one left a devil in his body
To take his place, and so did one his kinsman,
Who with him wrought the treachery in
concert. 147

But there! enough! stretch now thy hand out
hither;
Open my eyes." His eyes I did not open:
Best courtesy to him was to be brutish. 150

Ah, men of Genoa, ye men so foreign
From all good use, full of all imperfections!
Why from the world are ye not extirpated? 153

For with the foulest spirit of Romagna
One of you found I, who by his own doing
In soul doth bathe already in Cocytus, 156
And still above doth seem alive in body.

CANTO XXXIV

“ *Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*

To usward : therefore look now straight before
thee,”

Said my dear master : “ if thou canst
discern him.”

3

And even as when a heavy fog is breathing,
Or when our hemisphere is darkening night-
wards,

Far off appears a mill the wind is turning,
Meseemed I saw that moment such a structure.

6

Then, for the wind, I drew myself together
Behind my guide : there was no other refuge.

9

Now, and with fear I put it into metre,

There was I where the shades were wholly
covered,

And showing through, as shows in glass a
straw-mote.

12

Some are as lying down, and some set upright,

One on the head, and on the soles another ;

Bow-like another, face and feet together.

15

When we had made our progress so far forward

That to my master it seemed fit to show me

The creature that had once so fair a semblance,

18

He stepped aside, and to a halt he brought me ;
 Saying, " Lo ! yonder, Dis ; lo ! the place
 yonder
 Where thou must put on fortitude for
 armour." 21

How frozen I became thereat, how fainting,
 Ask it not, reader, for I do not write it,
 For all that I could say would be but little. 24

I did not die, nor yet remained I living.
 Bethink thee now, if aught of wit thou claimest,
 What I became, bereft of both together. 27

The sovereign monarch of the realm of sorrow
 Forth of the ice down to his mid-breast issued :
 And with a giant I am in proportion 30

More equal than are with his arms the giants.
 Consider, now, how vast must be the total
 Which in accord with such like part is
 fashioned. 33

If once he was as fair as he is loathly,
 And raised his brows even against his Maker,
 Well may it be from him proceeds all
 mourning. 36

Oh, how it seemed to me a mighty marvel
 When I beheld upon his head three faces !
 One was in front, and that one was
 vermilion : 39

Twain were the others, which made junction
 with it

Over the very middle of either shoulder,
 And in the place o' the crest they joined each
 other. 42

That on the right seemed betwixt white and
 yellow :

The left one was, to look at, such as those are
 Who come from where the Nile falls to its
 valley. 45

Underneath each of them two great wings issued,
 As large as with so large a fowl accorded :
 Sails of the sea such like beheld I never : 48

No feathers had they on them, but their fashion
 Was of a bat ; and these he ceased not flapping,
 So that three several winds were moving from
 him : 51

Thence was it that Cocytus all was frozen.
 With six eyes wept he ; and on three chins
 trickled

Adown the weeping and the bloody slaver, 54
 In every mouth he with his teeth was crunching

A sinner, in the manner of a flax-brake,
 So that he thus kept three of them in dolour. 57

To him in front the biting was as nothing,
 Matched with the clawing, so that oft the back-
 bone

Was left entirely of its skin denuded. 60

' That soul above, who suffers greatest torment,
 Is Judas, called Iscariot," said my master,

" Who, head within, his legs without is plying : 63
 Of the two others, those whose heads are down-
 ward,
 The one who hangs from the black jowl is
 Brutus :
 See how he writhes, and not a word he utters : 66
 Cassius the other one, who seems so lusty.
 But night is rising, and for our departure
 The time is come ; for we have now seen
 all things." 69
 As was his pleasure, by the neck I clasped him ;
 And he of time and place took fit occasion,
 And, when the wings were wide enough set
 open. 72
 Upon the tufted ribs firm grip he fastened :
 From tuft to tuft then downward he des-
 cended
 Between the thick-set hair and frozen
 crusting. 75
 When we were at the part just by the thigh-joint,
 Exactly at the swelling of the haunches,
 My leader, breathing hard, with toilsome
 effort, 78
 Turned his head round to where his shanks had
 rested,
 And grasped the hair like one who is upclimbing,
 So that I thought we were to hell returning. 81
 " Now keep fast hold ; for by such sort of ladders,"

The master said, panting like one o'erwearied,
 "From so great ill we needs must make
 departure." 84

Then through a great rock's opening forth he
 issued,

And down upon the edge he placed me sitting :
 Beside me then he set his prudent footstep. 87

I lifted up my eyes, and thought to look on

Lucifer in such wise as I had left him :

And I espied him with his legs held upward. 90

And if I then became oppressed with trouble,

Let ruder folk consider, those who see not

What is that point which I had just been
 passing. 93

"Raise thyself on thy feet ;" then said the
 master ;

"The way is long, and treacherous the path-
 way,

And to mid-tierce the sun is now returning." 96

'Twas in no antechamber of a palace

We were, but in a dungeon shaped by nature,

That had ill floor and scant supply of day-
 light. 99

"Ere from the abyss I tear myself asunder,

Master," I said, as soon as I was upright,

"To save me from mistake, tell me this little : 102

Where is the ice ? and how thus topsy-turvy

Is he set fast ? and how in so few moments

From eve to morn hath the sun made his
 transit ? " 105
 And he to me, " Thou still art, in thy fancy,
 Standing that side o' the centre where I
 grappled
 The hair of the world-piercing worm accursèd. 108
 That side thou wast as long as I descended :
 When I turned round, thou then that point
 wast passing
 Whereto from every side weights draw
 together : 111
 And now beneath that hemisphere art standing
 Which is opposed to that which over-arches
 The great dry land, and 'neath whose vault
 was stricken 114
 The man who in his birth and life was sinless :
 On that small sphere thou hast thy feet now
 resting
 Which makes the counterface of the
 Giudecca. 117
 Here it is morn, when yonder it is evening :
 And he who with his hair made us a ladder
 Still standeth fixt, even as he was aforetime. 120
 From this direction he fell down from heaven :
 And all the land which here before projected
 For fear of him made curtain of the ocean, 123
 And came into our hemisphere ; and, haply,
 To flee from him, what on this side is showing

Left here the empty space, and up rebounded." 126
A place there is below, just as far distant
From Beelzebub as the great tomb's
dimensions,
Which is not found by sight, but by the
tinkling 129
Of a little brook that trickles through a hollow
Down there within a rock which in its windings
It hath eroded, and the slope is gentle. 132
My guide and I upon that hidden pathway
Entered to make return to the world of
brightness ;
And, without taking thought of any resting, 135
We mounted up, he first and I the second,
So far that I had sight of things of beauty
Borne on the firmament, through a round
loophole : 138
Thence came we forth to see the starry heavens.



December, 1907.

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